

Stereo Review

The when, what, and why of
UPGRADING
for the Eighties

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS:

- Acoustic Research AR93 Speaker System
- Apt 1 Power Amplifier
- Dual 1264 Record Player
- Empire 600LAC Phono Cartridge
- Luxman R-3045 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

LACY J. DALTON:
The Hottest New Country
Ticket Going

FIRST VIDEODISC REVIEWS:

- Olivia Newton-John
- Loretta Lynn

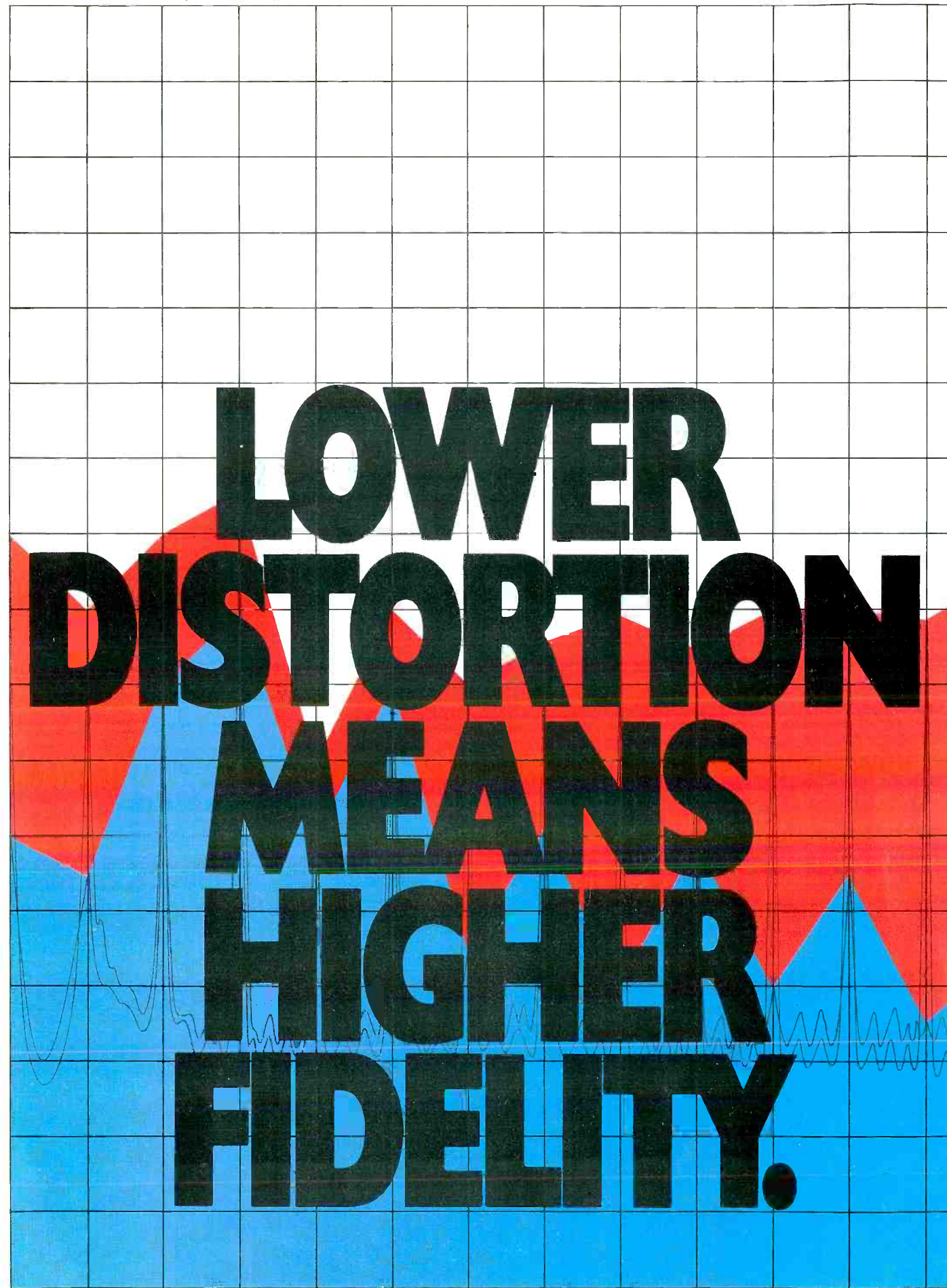
AUDIO DISC SPECIALS:

Karajan's New *Magic Flute*
 Larry Gatlin's "The Pilgrim"
 The Records' "Crashes"
 Murray Perahia's Mozart Concertos
 and ... Jackson Browne • Kid Creole
 Jimmy Rushing • Claude Bolling's *Picnic Suite*
 Korngold's *Kings Row*



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MEANS
HIGHER
FIDELITY.**

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Our new Non-Switching Receivers with Quartz Lock Tuning drastically reduce distortion and give you higher fidelity.

It seems like a simple enough premise. And it is.

Eliminate distortion and you clear the path for cleaner, crisper sound.

Unfortunately, many receiver companies have been more concerned about offering you a low price tag than they have been with offering you high fidelity.

But at Pioneer, we believe you shouldn't have to deal in high finance to get true high fidelity. And our new SX-3900 and SX-3800 receivers are proof of it.

The SX-3900 and SX-3800 eliminate the most significant form of audible distortion.

Switching distortion.

And although you may not have heard of it before, you probably have heard it on your hi-fi system. It's distortion caused by output transistors as they click on and off in response to music signals.

But we at Pioneer prefer to reproduce sound, rather than create it. That's why we've designed our new SX-3900 and SX-3800 receivers to completely eliminate switching distortion.

The Non-Switching SX-3900 and SX-3800 have revolutionary new amplifier circuitry that keeps output transistors from ever completely switching off. So they never have to click back on.

These transistors are exclusively ours. And you'll find they do as good a job of eliminating audible distortion at high frequencies as they do at greatly increasing frequency response.

The end result is that the SX-3900 and SX-3800 have Non-Switching Amplifier sections that deliver uncanny distortion levels of 0.005% THD at 20-20,000 hertz at 120 (and 60) watts per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms.

Our specs bring in compliments, but our receivers are best at bringing in something else. Radio stations.

The Pioneer SX-3900 and SX-3800 receivers also have our exclusive Quartz-Servo Lock Tuning System that's virtually

drift free. Once it electronically locks onto a broadcast signal, it holds it. So that anything that would normally interfere with the quality of your signal on conventional receivers is automatically eliminated by the SX-3900 and SX-3800.

You can be sure you'll get to appreciate our tuning section's specs, too.

Our digital quartz tuning systems give five digit readouts that exactly correspond to actual tuned frequencies. Our Fluorescan metering systems will let you see you're getting the most out of your speakers, as well.

Because the meter's usable range is over 50dB from .001 to 120 watts of power.

If you're beginning to think these receivers are like none you've ever seen or heard, you're right. That's why we suggest you get down to your nearest Pioneer dealer to see and hear the SX-3900 and SX-3800 receivers with Non-Switching Amplification.

You'll not only be impressed with what you hear, you'll be impressed with what you don't.

NON SWITCHING

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We bring it back alive.

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Pioneer Non-Switching Receivers.



SX-3800

SX-3900



Distortion in dB -100

-120

-140

-160

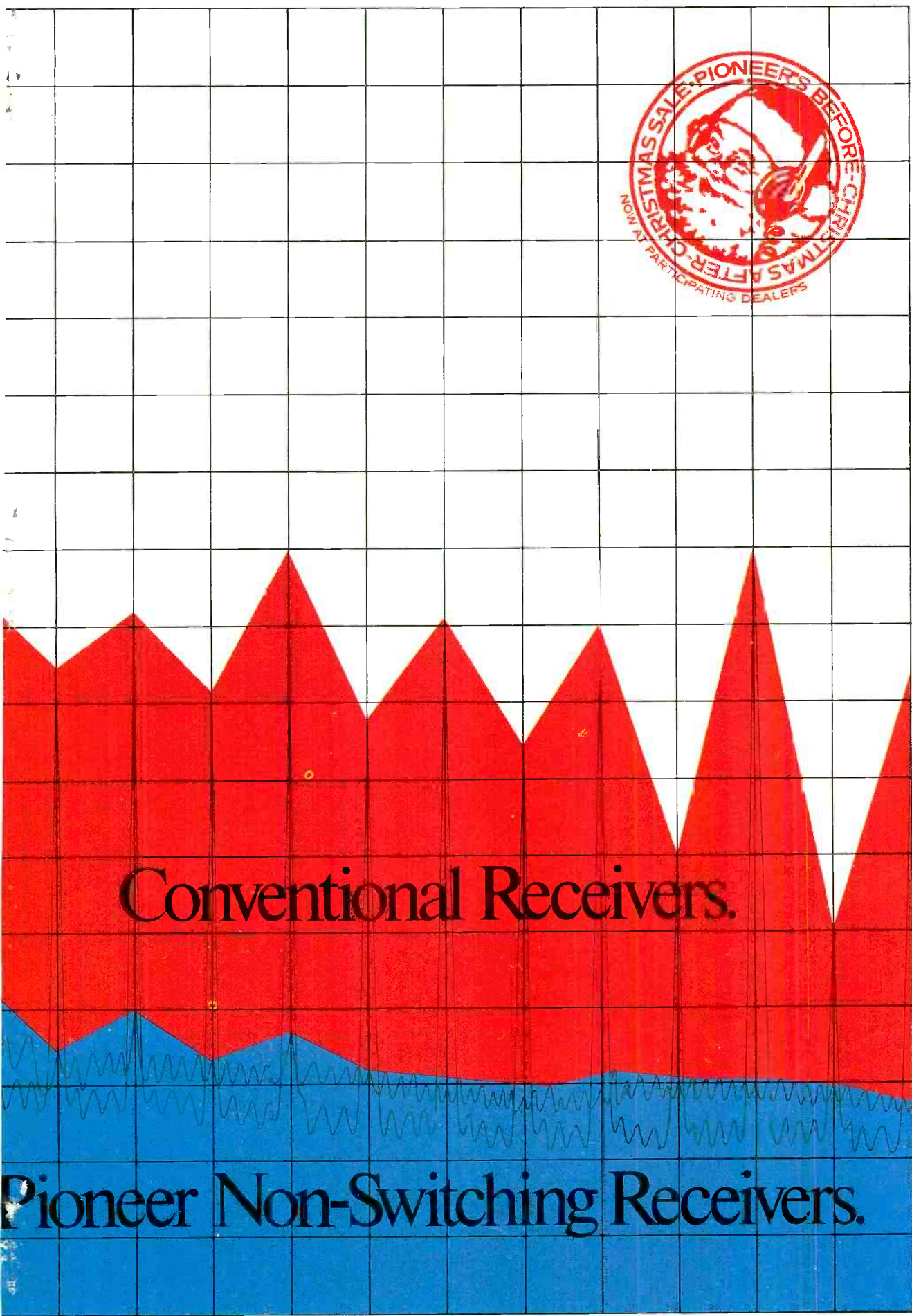
Conventional Receivers.

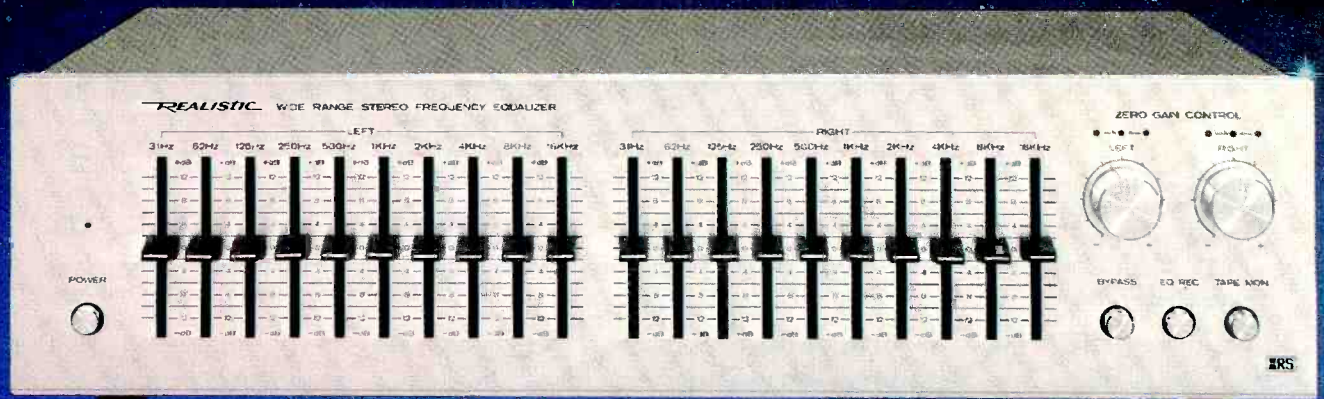
Pioneer Non-Switching Receivers.

300

400

500





Five Important Reasons Why You Should Own This New Realistic® 10-Band Equalizer.

1. Matches your system to any room.

Some rooms are acoustically "dead" due to thick carpeting and tons of overstuffed furniture. Some are acoustically "live" because of tile floors and hardwood paneling. Either environment will murder your music by altering the sound you hear by 6 decibels or more. Ordinary *broadband* bass and treble controls can't compensate for these imbalances because they alter far too much of the audio spectrum. But the Realistic wide-range equalizer, with 10 *narrow bands* and 10 controls for each channel, gives you total command from 31 to 16,000 Hz. You can add to or subtract from the music by up to 12 dB for a complete, creative control range of 24 dB.

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Remove annoying record scratches from old LPs and 78s

without removing the music. Just reduce the audio level at 8 and 16 kHz. Rumble is eliminated with the 31 and 62 Hz controls but the bass remains intact. Substandard audio from careless radio stations can be cleaned up by a little re-equalization on your part.

3. Improves your speakers.

Moving a speaker 6" out from a wall can degrade bass response by 8 to 10 dB. But sometimes you have to. This equalizer restores the lost performance. And you can en-

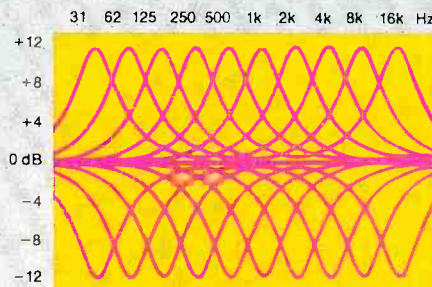
hance the sound of the best speakers even when they're perfectly placed. Electronic equalization is the only way you can extend the response of a speaker.

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Stereo Review®

NOVEMBER 1980 • VOLUME 45 • NUMBER 5

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DISCWASHER® AUDIO SCIENCE™ SERIES

Record Care, Part 1:

Aqueous Cleaning vs. Organic Solvents

Electron microscopy (Figure 1) shows the principal cause of record wear: small particles of microdust, deposited from the air by gravity, are ground along the record groove by the stylus. Surface noise goes up. Sound quality goes down.



Figure 1

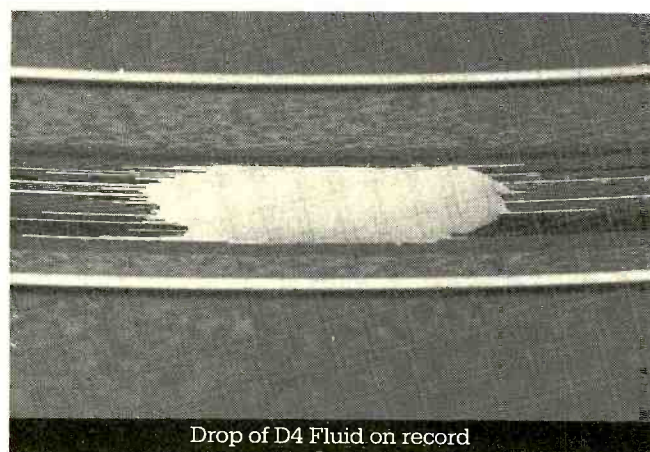


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows a drop of the aqueous Discwasher D4 Fluid, literally lifting dust and contamination out of record grooves. The extraordinarily complex D4 Fluid uses water pure enough for kidney dialysis, along with eleven chemically engineered additives that still results in lower dry-weight residue than most tap water. This formula is amazingly high in cleaning activity, uniquely safe for vinyl and vinyl additives, and preferentially "carries" contamination into the new Discwasher D4 pad.

In some record care products, organic solvents are used rather than water. Organic solvents such as ozone-gobbling chlorofluorocarbons, petroleum distillates (hexane, heptane) and alcohol concentrates are indeed speedy extractors and delivery solvents. They evaporate fast. Some organic solvents can dissolve vinyl stabilizers, Organic solvents may leave a "slick" looking record by treating the disc with other compounds carried in the solvent mix. In doing so, record contamination may also be dried back onto the disc in a nice even layer. Dust is often "held" to the record surface by "treatment."



Figure 3

Electron micrograph (Figure 3) shows a record cleaned with the Discwasher D4 System. High technology record care leaves only a clean surface.



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Discwasher, Inc., 1407 N. Providence Rd., Columbia, MO 65201



Edited by William Livingstone

● PIONEER'S LASER OPTICAL VIDEODISC system, originally introduced in only four markets, is now available to consumers in fifteen cities. First sold in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Madison, Wisc., Dallas/Fort Worth, and Syracuse, N.Y., units are now also on sale in Denver, Houston, Fort Wayne, Phoenix, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Richmond, Jackson, Miss., and Wilmington, Del. The suggested retail price for the Pioneer LaserDisc system, which has stereo sound, is \$749.00. The first MCA Discovision musical videodiscs for the system are reviewed in this issue.

● AWARDS: Holland's \$75,000 Erasmus Prize for outstanding contributions to European culture was given jointly to conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt and harpsichordist Gustav Leonhardt for their work in Baroque music....George Jellinek, music director of WQXR and opera critic for Stereo Review, has received the Austrian Cross of Honor for Science and Art, first class, for his services in promoting Austrian music and culture in the United States.

● THE INTERNATIONAL GRAND PRIX for recordings of the music of Franz Liszt was given this year to two recordings in the piano division, Jorge Bolet's album of Five Concert Studies and Don Juan Fantasy (L'Oiseau-Lyre 41) and Alicia de Larrocha's recording of the Sonata in B Minor (London CS 6989). In the orchestral category the winner was Sir Georg Solti's recording of Les Préludes, Prometheus, and Festklänge with the London Symphony. (London CS 7084). The awards are presented every year in Budapest on October 22, Franz Liszt's birthday.

● THE LATE CONDUCTOR LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI made 138 78-rpm recordings and 183 LPs between 1917 and his death in 1977. A complete collection of these discs has been donated to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia by Robert L. Gatewood of Warren, Arkansas. It took him thirty-three years to complete the collection. Music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1912 to 1938, Stokowski also taught at Curtis.

● MUSIC WRITTEN BY CHINESE COMPOSERS from 1948 to the Cultural Revolution of the mid-1960s has been recorded by Hong Kong Records and pressed in Japan by JVC. Imported by Brillly Imports, 155 North San Vicente Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211, the records list for \$11.98 per disc.

● A NEW CATEGORY OF AUDIO EQUIPMENT IS the ultralightweight cassette player and headphone combination introduced this year by Sony as the Soundabout, Stowaway, or Walkman, depending on the country you buy it in. Small enough to wear instead of carry, the unit has extraordinarily high playback quality, and it accommodates headsets for two people who walk very close together. Listing for about \$200 in the U.S. and rather more abroad, the Walkman became a chic add-on for the summer costumes of vacationers in jet-set resorts, and dealers around the world were unable to keep the unit in stock. However, Sony's competitors did not estivate. By fall Aiwa, Panasonic, and Toshiba had introduced similar units.

● POP SINGER NATALIE COLE WANTS YOU to join her in stopping smoking on November 20, the day of the American Cancer Society's fourth Great American Smokeout. A current smoker who has tried to quit many times, Ms. Cole has volunteered to be the chairman of the 1980 Smokeout. Her father, Nat King Cole, died of lung cancer. According to the ACS, going "cold turkey" is the most effective way to quit smoking.

● BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN'S LONG OVERDUE double album tentatively titled "The River" may be delayed further because of a new tune called Roulette. CBS executives, who were already nervous about Bruce's anti-nuke activities, did not warm to the song, the angry story of a family living in the shadow of Three Mile Island. Also a problem is The Way, a love song allegedly written for Bruce's now extremely ex-girlfriend, who is said to be suing Springsteen on charges of public humiliation stemming from an incident at the "No Nukes" concerts last year.

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



GOD BLESS BUTTERFLY

I AM struck anew every once in a while by the interconnectedness of practically everything, just now by the effect Ed Asner (some of us know him better as Lou Grant) and his fellow-members of the Screen Actors Guild are very likely going to have on the marketing timetable for videodisc hardware and software.

As you probably know, SAG members have been on strike for a couple of months for (surprise!) wage increases and, more important, for a share in the rich pot they see at the end of the video-revolution rainbow: understandably, they want a piece of the action when their TV-show performances are resold for pay-TV, videocassette, and videodisc. This monstrous selfishness (!) is so shocking, so unheard-of on the part of the hired help that it may have unsettled the

minds of those who employ them. In mid September the New York *Times* quoted Fred Silverman, president of NBC, in a speech before a meeting of Hollywood studio and broadcast executives: "There is no 'revolution.' There is no rainbow. There is no bottomless pot of gold." Is that bankable prophecy or disingenuous poppycock? If the former, then the intransigence of the employers is pointless; give SAG the empty bag it is asking for. If it is the latter, it gives the parties concerned a fresh opportunity to address a still incompletely solved problem of equity, one unique to the twentieth century: What are the rights of performing artists in the reuse of their labors?

The result of the performing arts' encounters with film, disc, and tape technologies, this question has generally been re-

solved up until now in favor of the entrepreneurs, those who buy "the rights"—all of them—to filmed or otherwise recorded artistic enterprises and then proceed to do with them what they will. And so, when *Kings Row* (see page 128) plays a sold-out week in a New York re-run movie house, Ronald Reagan and Robert Cummings collect not a dime (not that they need it); but neither does Butterfly McQueen (who, bless her heart, probably does) when *Gone with the Wind* makes its umpteenth circuit of the nation's cinemas—or Mr. Silverman's Late Show. There are those who will say, "But they've already been paid once, haven't they?" Yes, and the entrepreneurs have already made their profits once too. SAG wants to put an end to onesidedness.

If the resolution of these matters in the TV sphere is chancy, it is even more so in the musical realm, where there are not only performers, unions, and record companies involved, but producers, composers, lyricists, music publishers, and performing-rights organizations. There has been very little contract writing in the video/music area, and not much new software produced either (our first videodisc reviews appear on page 108). Audio recording goes on in accordance with apparently equitable contracts, and it is not inconceivable that some of it will one day find its way onto lip-sync videodiscs. And the musicians' union has already made one large concession: they have permitted the taping of important TV broadcasts involving music (the Live from Lincoln Center series), the tapes to be held in escrow until everyone can agree on how to share that "nonexistent" pot. Let us hope that the parties in the current TV dispute find a just formula soon, one that will provide a model for the music industry and perhaps give a little overdue bonus of satisfaction (if no cash) to a few pensioned old Hollywood bit players in the bargain. □

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VCX-600 Three-Head Cassette Deck wow and flutter is less than 0.06%. Frequency response (± 3 dB): metal tape, 30 to 20,000 Hz; Co or CrO₂ tape, 30 to 18,000 Hz.

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State of the **AR**t.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tonio's Choice

● How many times am I going to have to warn you people? The "greatest record ever made" is *not* "Life in the Foodchain," *not* "Amerika," but "James Brown Live at the Apollo." And that's not to mention Dick Dale's "Surfer's Choice" or Sonny Boy Williamson doing *Little Village*. Besides, these so-called Tonio K. albums are cult items. There's a cult of hundreds of millions of people who haven't bought them. The entire population of mainland China, for instance, has stayed away from record stores en masse. Ask any Chinaman and he's gonna tell you: "James Brown Live at the Apollo." Trust me.

TONIO K.
Calabasas, Calif.

The Rolling Stones

● In reference to Steve Simels' "The Still-Rolling Stones" in September: why the continued success of the Stones? I think it's the old Lawrence Welk syndrome. In today's crisis-after-crisis environment, it's nice to have someone around who's "reliable," "dependable," who "won't throw a scare into us." We've gone from the Vietnam War to our present problems, from teenage skin problems to adulthood, but, yes, Larry and the Stones are *both* still there. I was a Stones fan, but fifteen-plus years of the same bass runs, of Charlie's drumming and Mick's antics, are enough. And now the *coup de grâce*—the Stones singing falsetto. Really.

P.S.: I thoroughly enjoy receiving STEREO REVIEW each month. Now if I could only convince my wife of the need to update my entire system

MONT G. ASHWORTH
Helper, Utah

See page 58.

Big-picture TV

● As a manufacturer with an ax to grind, we want to thank STEREO REVIEW for so clearly reporting in the September issue on

the emerging audio-video industry and the opportunities it presents. We at Advent believe that the audio and video businesses of today will merge into the total home-entertainment business of the future. And that will provide the current audio and video industries with a tremendous growth thrust.

There was one small error in the "Big-picture TV" section of September's CES article: the Advent VB 125 was referred to as a rear-projection unit. It isn't! The Advent VB 125 is a highly sophisticated one-piece *front*-projection unit.

MARGARET BRUZELIUS
Advent Corporation
Cambridge, Mass.

Gladys Knight

● On page 93 of the September issue, Phyl Garland refers to "twenty-five years of fruitful collaboration" between Gladys Knight and the Pips at the time of their break-up in 1978. Can this be right? If I'm not mistaken, Gladys Knight was ten years old in 1953.

CHRIS KRAHN
Montpelier, Vt.

Pop Music Editor Paulette Weiss replies: Gladys Knight was born in 1944, was singing in churches by the age of four, and formed the Pips in 1952; she was twelve when they had their first national tour. Bit of an early starter, I'd say.

Commodore Records

● Chris Albertson's September review of "Chu Berry: A Giant of the Tenor Sax" from Commodore Records included an ordering address in Terre Haute, Indiana. I sent a check there for the album, but it was returned, the envelope marked "addressee unknown." What gives?

HARRY L. ECHOLS
Hyattsville, Md.

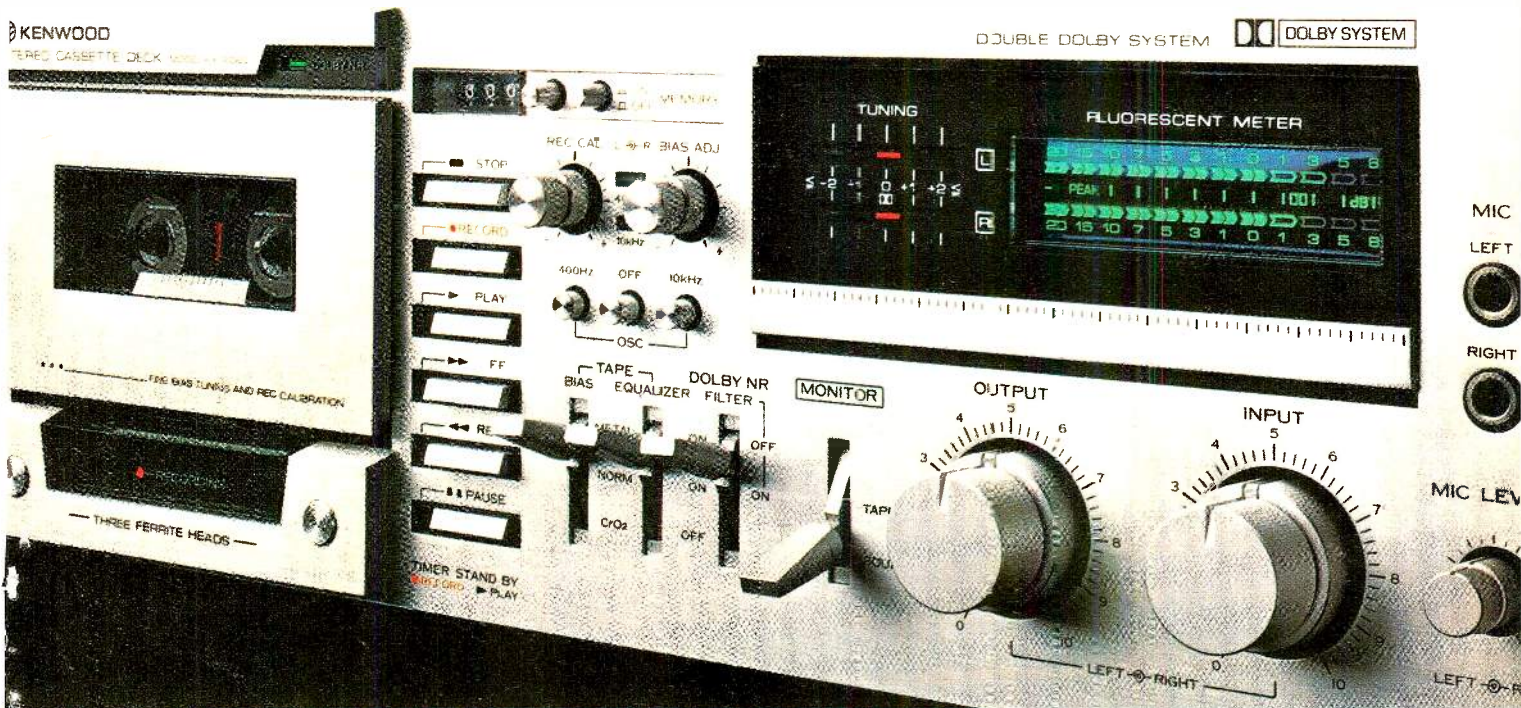
We regret the bum steer. The Indiana address we gave is printed on the album cover.

(Continued on page 10)



AR Verticals, the finest speakers in AR history.
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Left to right: AR9, AR91, AR92, AR90.
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THE KENWOOD KX-2060 STEREO CASSETTE DECK

Recently, we challenged our designers and engineers to solve an extremely difficult assignment: design a cassette deck that each of them would be proud to own.

The result is an impressive array of engineering, performance and styling features. The remarkable KX-2060.

Twin oscillator variable fine-bias adjustment allows you to precisely adjust frequency response to get the best performance from every cassette tape formulation, including metal.

Three head, Double Dolby* design provides true monitoring of Dolby-encoded signals while you're recording. And our unique Dolby calibration

system lets you match input and output characteristics with the sensitivity of each tape for perfect recording and playback.

Fluorescent peak meters provide fast, 10 millisecond response to give you the most accurate musical peak information.

High stability tape transport uses our unique double back tension system to main-

tain constant tape tension and reduce wow and flutter.

There are even more innovative performance and convenience features engineered into our new KX-2060. Like light-touch solenoid function controls. 4-position equalization switching. Memory indexing. MPX filtering. And more.

See your Kenwood dealer for a demonstration of the new KX-2060. Why settle for any cassette deck, when you can own something truly remarkable.

Performance Specifications:

Frequency Response:
20 Hz to 19,000 Hz (Metal)
Signal to Noise Ratio:
70dB (Dolby ON, Metal)
Wow and Flutter:
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For the Kenwood dealer nearest you, see your Yellow Pages, or write Kenwood, P.O. Box 6213, Carson, CA 90749.

*Dolby is the trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

 **KENWOOD®**

but it seems that the best way to order the album if you can't get it through your record store is from the distributor, Columbia Special Products, 51 West 52nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 (att.: John Franks).

Sonic Holograms

● In Ivan Berger's report on audio accessories at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show (September issue), it was stated that "The 'Sonic Hologram' circuit in the Carver C-4000 preamp has inspired a host of other image-processing devices. . . ."—among them the Omnisonix Model 801 Omnisonic Imager. Allow me to state for

the record that the Model 801 was not the result of inspiration by any other product. The truth of the matter is that we had never heard of Carver or the C-4000 when we started work on the Omnisonic Imager. We would like our unit to be judged on its individual merits as an original product—which is the way it was designed.

THOMAS "DOC" CAVALIER
Executive Director, Omnisonix, Ltd.
Northford, Conn.

Speaker Placement

● Peter Mitchell's tips on loudspeaker placement in the August issue have enabled

me to come up with the best solution to date to the stereo sound problem in my music room. Many, many thanks.

FRANK PEDROJA
Wichita, Kan.

Born-again Dylan

● I was deeply perturbed by Steve Simels' offhand criticism of Bob Dylan's conversion to Christianity (in the Mark Knopfler interview, June issue). Dylan has always lived in his own space, and his "rebirth" (whatever that means) is just a further development of his self. Who knows, he might be forty years ahead of his time.

MARK NUGENT
Montreal, Quebec

The Editor replies: Dylan may be living "in his own space," but he is an entertainer, and he has been making a point of sharing that space with the rest of the world through his songs lately. Are we to ignore the content of those songs, something that he obviously finds important? So we don't ignore the content—but then what if we can't, in all honesty, agree with it, and particularly with the effect it has had on his art?

● Steve Simels occasionally makes sense, but in his purported rebuttal of critics in September's "Letters" he abandons it altogether. Mr. Simels argues that "if, say, Bob Dylan suddenly turns into a self-righteous bore, one is perfectly justified in re-evaluating his early work—the child, after all, is father to the man." Does Mr. Simels really believe that works conceived years ago depend for their merit on their creator's continued maintenance of an equal standard? Would *Hamlet* be tarnished if Shakespeare had later (or earlier, for that matter) penned *Death of a Salesman*? And his argument is not advanced by the observation that the child is father to the man. Mr. Simels' point is supposed to be that the man is father to the child's work. Had he put his proof in proper sequence, its absurdity would have been evident even to him.

DAVID H. DUNLAP
Overland Park, Kan.

*Steve Simels replies: Well, think about it for a moment . . . if Shakespeare had written *Death of a Salesman* after *Hamlet*, wouldn't we have to be just a little suspicious that there was more accident than art in the earlier play?*

"Betrayed" by the Jukes

● Steve Simels once again hit the nail on the head with his September review of "Love Is a Sacrifice" by Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes. I too felt betrayed by this album. Don't get me wrong; it's a good LP, but it isn't the music that we're used to hearing from the Jukes. You could see the trend to rock after their last album, but I didn't think they would go this far. Two things are missing here: Bruce Springsteen's and Steve Van Zandt's songwriting and Van Zandt's production. Compare "Love Is a Sacrifice" with what Van Zandt did with the Jukes' first three albums; the

(Continued on page 12)

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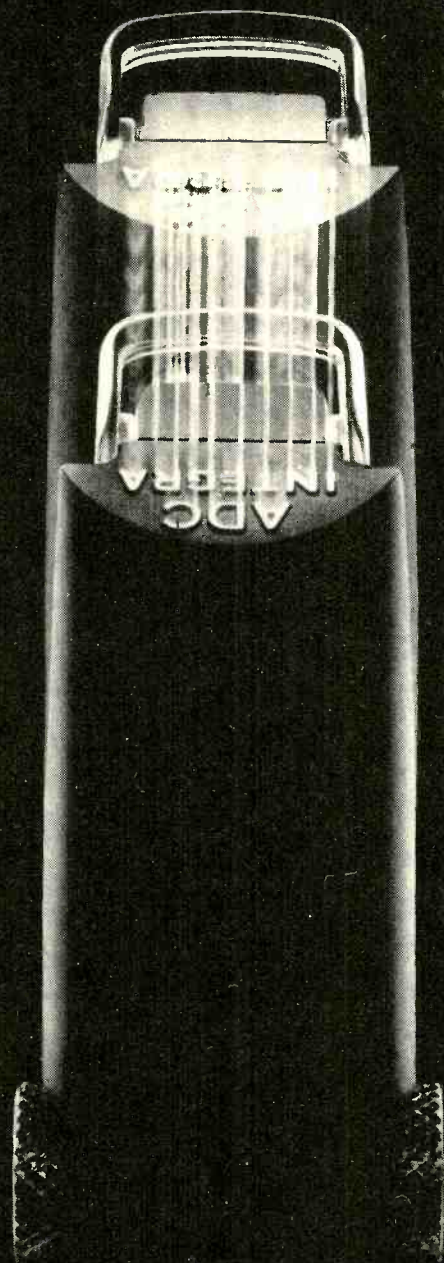
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CIRCLE NO. 30 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Our ADC Integra phono-cartridge's overhang adjustment VS their nuts, bolts and hassles.



As your tonearm sweeps a record, the angle the stylus makes with the record groove constantly changes. The result? Offset angle distortion. It's an old problem. That's why it took a new kind of cartridge to solve it...our ADC Integra. Unlike conventional cartridges, the ADC Integra is a carbon fibre integrated headshell/cartridge with overhang dimension adjustment. There are no more nuts, no more bolts and that means no more hassles. To minimize offset angle distortion all you do is release the adjustment locks. Adjust. Then re-lock. It's incredibly simple. We've even included a tracking angle gauge. So it's also incredibly accurate. Because we know even an error as small as 2° can more than double cartridge distortion! Impressed? We thought so. But the most impressive feature of our new overhang dimension adjustment is that it is available in three different ADC Integra models. One for every kind of budget. All for one kind of sound...devastating. If you'd like to hear more call Audio Dynamics Corp. toll-free (800) 243-9544 or your ADC dealer.



CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

loss of "the Boss" is self-explanatory. Let's hope that the Jukes read Mr. Simels' review and get smart before they make another "Sacrifice."

JOHN SCHALLER
Bangor, Wis.

Beatles Past

● As preface, let me say that (1) I do not "worship" the Beatles, (2) I do not own or intend to buy the recent "Rarities" album, and (3) I am something of a fan of Steve Simels' rock criticism (in fact, he is one of the few of that breed whom I trust, more or less). But the reasoning in his July review of "Rarities" and rebuttal to several letters in September is *just plain wrong!*

Though Mr. Simels pretty much admits that the Beatles wrote the best rock music to date, he goes on to say that "they no longer speak to [him]" because "life goes on." Were this simply a matter of personal taste there would be no grounds for refutation, but it is not. His central point seems to be that because things change, yesterday's classic is today's nostalgia and as such no longer relevant. To which I can only say, yes, things do change, but people don't change all that much, and what people today want out of art—high-, low-, or middle-brow—is basically the same thing they have wanted since people and art began. This "thing" is very hard to articulate, but perhaps it can best be described as the ability to make life more livable. Because some examples of art are more successful at this than others, they are more highly regarded. Such works are (and ought to be) standards to which all art can be compared.

I think Mr. Simels is here guilty of an "ostrichism" even more dangerous than the one he pins on Beatles fans: namely, burying one's head in the sand of the present. He is so anxious to avoid living in the past that he winds up in a one-dimensional present.

PHILIP PETRIE
Peace Dale, R.I.

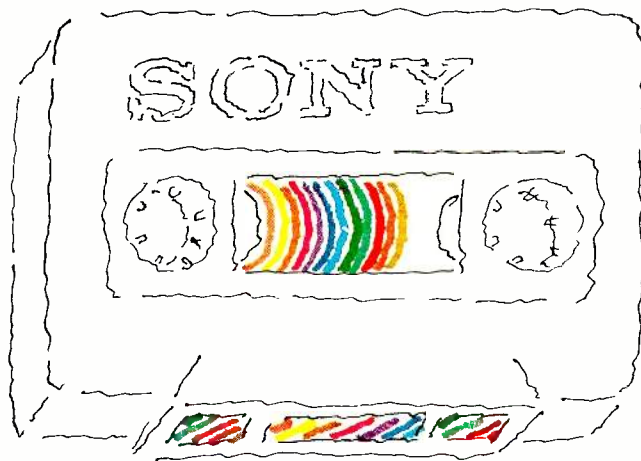
Steve Simels replies: The point of my "Rarities" review was not that people should throw away their Beatles records. It was, rather, that the public's (re)current Beatles obsession, the continuing repackaging of their work, and the recent performances of Paul and George (I've got my fingers crossed for John) are doing a great deal to cheapen their reputation. If all this continues, it's possible that the Beatles could stop being history and become merely camp, which is the last thing anyone should want.

Erratum

● We regret the erroneous report of the death of composer Charles Harold Bernstein in Eric Salzman's February 1980 review of Laurel Records' third volume of his works. Mr. Bernstein is alive and healthy and in Brussels, Belgium, where he is busily adding to his *opera*. Volume 4 of his works is now available from Laurel (LR 113), and the previous three remain available (LR 101/2, 105, and 108). Our apologies to Mr. Bernstein and to those readers whom we inadvertently misinformed.

STEREO REVIEW

Inside Full Color Sound.



There's more to Full Color Sound than meets the ear.

There is a story of experience and technical achievement that no other tape manufacturer can tell. Fact: Sony is the only company that produces both high fidelity audio and video tape and the high quality equipment that plays it. Fact: Sony pioneered magnetic tape recording, and has been producing tape and tape equipment for over 30 years.

Because of this vast and unique experience, we believe Sony knows more about producing high quality recording tape than anyone else. Sony know-how goes beyond exclusive magnetic particles and glues, or our exceptionally smooth SP transport system, or superb MOL and frequency response.

What Sony does in its own unique way has to do with *balance*. The fine-tuning of all the elements that go into making a tape, so that each complements the other, and together—in balance—deliver the finest recording that is humanly and technically possible to achieve.

It is this balance that is the secret of Full Color Sound. It isn't really difficult to make one particular element extraordinarily superb. So when some tapes boast about a particular feature,

we are not impressed. And neither should you be.

The true test of a tape is to balance these superb elements, some of which actually work against each other. For example, high sensitivity (so vital for MOL and S/N ratio) can produce print-through. Another example: increasing the volume of magnetic particles on the tape improves sensitivity. However, this would decrease tape durability and increase head wear.

Some of the factors that we consider important to tape performance are: MOL, frequency response, S/N ratio, sensitivity, uniformity of output level, print-through, erasability, and such physical attributes as runability, shedding, head wear, resistance to temperature and humidity.

This is where the genius of Sony comes in. To take all these elements and balance them so they work with, instead of against each other.

Balance. It's why Sony audio tapes are so superb. The fact is, the more expensive your audio equipment, the more you'll appreciate Full Color Sound. Listen to Sony SHF (normal bias), EHF (high bias), FeCr or Metallic tape yourself. Listen to the balance. It's the secret of Full Color Sound.

SONY

CIRCLE NO 52 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories



Sansui Tuner Offers Twelve Station Pre-sets

□ A digital synthesizing tuner, the Sansui TU-S7S offers automatic scanning of the AM and FM bands by means of up/down pushbuttons, a digital station-frequency readout, a five-LED signal-strength indicator, and an FM noise-reducing switch. The tuner can memorize settings for six FM and six AM stations and has a calibration tone suitable for setting tape-recording levels. IHF sensitivity is given as 10.5 dBf (1.8 microvolts). Signal-to-noise ratio is given as 83 dB, total harmonic distortion on FM as 0.07 per cent (mono) or 0.08 per cent (stereo). Capture ratio is 1 dB. The unit is available with a silver-colored 17-inch-wide front panel (shown) or a rack-mountable black face plate (Model TU-S7). Price for either version: \$320.

Circle 120 on reader service card

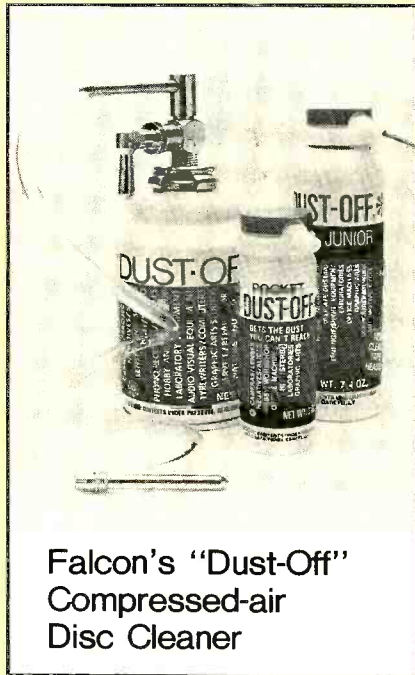


RCA's New AutoSound Receiver/Cassette In-dash Units

□ RCA's new models 12R808 and 12R809 AM/FM stereo receiver/cassette players, suitable for in-dash installation in most domestic and imported cars, have universal DIN-type nosepieces and adjustable shafts. Features include a stereo/mono switch, stereo indicator light, AFC (automatic frequency control) on FM, and left-to-right balance control. The 12R809 (shown) also has a fader control for front-to-rear adjustment, leads for an automatic power-antenna activator and a dial-light dimmer, and provision for four speakers. Both units have locking fast-forward in their cassette players; the same control is also used for tape eject and automatic switching to radio. Power output of both models is 5 watts per channel into 4 ohms at 10 per cent total har-

monic distortion. The nosepiece measures $4\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{16}$ inches with chassis dimensions of $13\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{16} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Both units are supplied with mounting hardware and special six-pin speaker-lead connectors with unterminated lead extensions as well as complete installation instructions. Prices: 12R808, \$90.95; 12R809, \$105.95.

Circle 121 on reader service card



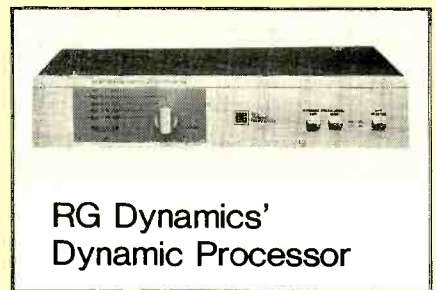
Falcon's "Dust-Off" Compressed-air Disc Cleaner

□ Falcon Safety Products' "Dust-Off," already well known to photographers, is now being marketed to audiophiles for record cleaning. Dust-Off canisters, available in three sizes, hold compressed air that is directed through a tube or nozzle to blow dust away. The refillable regular size holds 14 ounces and comes with a chrome valve and trigger assembly. The "junior" size is 7.4 ounces, the "pocket" size 3 ounces. A 2-foot extension tube is available for the regular and junior sizes. Prices: regular, \$18.75 (refills, \$3.95); junior, \$3.98; pocket, \$1.98; extension tube, \$3.95.

The new "Stat-Off" is a device that attaches to a Dust-Off canister and ionizes the air flow; this is said to help loosen the dust to be blown away as well as destaticizing the record surface being cleaned. It is available either with a pocket-size Dust-Off already attached or as an adapter to be fitted to a regular-size Dust-Off. Prices: pocket Stat-Off, \$29.95; Stat-Off Adapter, \$14.95.

For the tape recordist, Falcon has a head-cleaning kit consisting of a pocket-size Dust-Off and a packet of special flat-head cotton swabs pre-soaked in isopropyl alcohol. Price: \$6.95.

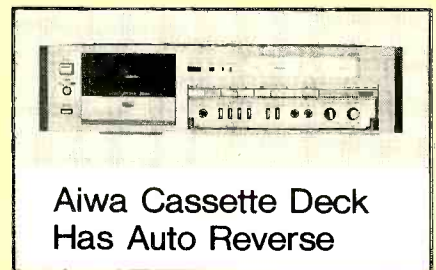
Circle 122 on reader service card



RG Dynamics' Dynamic Processor

□ At its full setting, the RG X-15 dynamic processor offers 15 dB of dynamic-range expansion so as to restore live impact and musical detail to discs, tapes, and FM broadcasts with a minimum of adjustments. The unit has four expansion settings, including one optimized for tape recording. The processor has facilities allowing tape playback and recording with or without dynamic processing. The left and right channels are processed separately, and there is an image-control circuit said to enhance left-to-right and front-to-back imaging. Price: \$255. RG Dynamics, Inc., Dept. SR, 4448 West Howard Street, Skokie, Ill. 60076.

Circle 123 on reader service card



Aiwa Cassette Deck Has Auto Reverse

□ Aiwa's AD-R500U cassette deck has three functional modes: conventional recording or playback of a single side, automatic recording or playback of both sides in sequence, and continuous uninterrupted playback of both sides. The auto-reverse mechanism is activated by an infrared sensor system and operates in 0.4 second. The dual-motor unit has a sendust record/playback head and a double-gap ferrite erase head. Bias and equalization switching for low-noise and chromium-dioxide tapes is automatic; a front-panel switch is used for metal tape. Other features include VU meters with three-step peak-indicating LEDs, Dolby noise reduction, headphone output, solenoid controls, and a timer record/play switch. Frequency response at a -20-VU recording level is given as 30 to 17,000 Hz +2, -3 dB with metal tape. Signal-to-noise ratio is 65 dB with the Dolby circuits on and using metal tape; weighted-rms wow and flutter is 0.05 per cent. Dimensions are $17\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Price: \$450.

Circle 124 on reader service card

(Continued on page 16)

The continuing story of TDK sound achievement.

Parts Five and Six.



The guide roller and spindle pin are the turning point in a TDK cassette. It's there the tape takes on a sudden surge of tension. The winding angle changes sharply to 75°, causing great stress. The slightest imperfection, even a microscopic speck, will cause serious output fluctuations in sound.

TDK engineers began by analyzing existing molding techniques. They knew many manufacturers used a low cost, inferior split-die process. This turned out rollers with seams, which disturb tape travel. Spindle pins were no better. Merely convenient mold extensions with pullout tapers which allowed rollers to slip up, wear out and wrench the tape off the track.

Part Five, the TDK guide roller, is flared and absolutely seamless. Made from a low-friction precision

molded plastic, it's created in one piece through an expensive forced-injection mold technique. Its flared edges provide perfect tape guidance while its six spokes maintain rigidity and perfect circularity. The tape flows through the mechanism and past the head gap in true vertical alignment. There's virtually no tracking variation or loss of high frequencies. Sixty checkpoints during the manufacturing process guarantee it.

For *Part Six*, the TDK spindle pin, our engineers chose stainless steel. Machined to size and aligned to a perfect 90°, it's designed without a taper. Micro-polishing and a silicone coating cut down friction. The TDK spindle pin is far more resistant to heat and cold than plastic. It won't bend out of shape

and wear down the spindle. Tape is assured safe passage with virtually no flutter or channel loss.

In a TDK cassette, the parts are much like the instruments of an orchestra. All equally important. Music is an outcome of the perfect interplay between them. In the end, that's what's so distinctive about TDK.

Music is the sum of its parts.

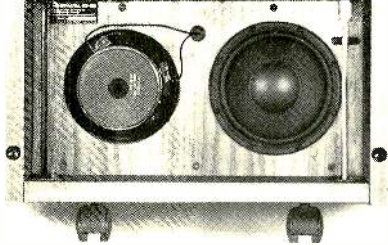


TDK guide roller and spindle pin in cassette.



TDK
The Amazing Music Machine.
CIRCLE NO. 59 ON READER SERVICE CARD

LOW FIDELITY



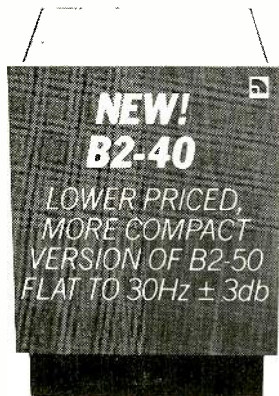
AUDIO PRO B2-50 SUB WOOFER

Without fidelity in the low frequencies, no speaker can deliver full high fidelity.

But the reason for adding the Audio Pro B2-50 Subwoofer to your system goes much deeper than having the bass essential to "life-like" sound reproduction.

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LOWER PRICED,
MORE COMPACT
VERSION OF B2-50
FLAT TO 30Hz ± 3db

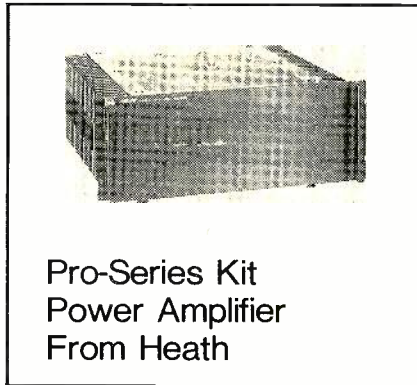
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From Heath

□ The rack-mountable Heathkit AA-1800 power amplifier is rated for a power output of 250 watts per channel into 8 ohms with less than 0.025 per cent total harmonic distortion from 20 to 20,000 Hz. Separate LEDs for each channel light up at full output power. The unit has a wire-frame chassis, said to be similar to those used in computers, for greater durability in a smaller package. The AA-1800 kit comes with all the necessary components, including solder, to complete the amplifier. Price: \$599.95. Heath Company, Dept. SR, Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022.

Circle 125 on reader service card



Technicolor's
Portable VCR

□ Technicolor's battery-operated compact portable videocassette recorder uses 1/4-inch tape in cassettes only slightly larger than their audio counterparts and a new recording format that is non-compatible with VHS or Beta VCRs. The unit will record color video plus sound either from a standard color video camera, another VCR, or a video tuner (most standard brands are usable). Each cassette holds 30 minutes of tape, and the rechargeable battery provides 80 minutes of operating time (or 40 minutes when a camera is also being run from it). Operation is also possible from an external 12-volt d.c. source or, with an adapter, from

a 120-volt a.c. outlet. The Technicolor video recorder measures 9 1/16 x 10 3/16 x 3 inches and weighs 7 pounds including battery. Price: \$995, including a.c. power adapter, battery, earphone, connecting cables, and one cassette.

Circle 126 on reader service card



Celestion's New
Speaker Line

□ The Ditton 130 loudspeaker system from Celestion Industries is a two-way acoustic-suspension design and the first of three new, lower-price models in the Ditton series. The drivers for the Ditton 130 are said to have greater efficiency and wider dispersion than those in previous models. The unit's 1-inch dome tweeter is flush-mounted in line with its 8-inch woofer. The woofer has a low-mass polyvinyl-chloride surround said to permit greater efficiency than a typical neoprene surround. Crossover frequency is 3,000 Hz, rated impedance 8 ohms. The speaker generates an 87-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with an input of 1 watt. Dimensions are 19 x 10 x 9 1/2 inches; weight is 17.2 pounds. Finish is walnut-grain vinyl with a black grille cloth. Price: \$200. Celestion Industries, Inc., Dept. SR, Kuniholm Drive, Box 521, Holliston, Mass. 01746.

Circle 127 on reader service card

Note: The photo above of the Celestion Ditton 130 speaker appeared on page 13 of the October issue accompanying a "New Products" item on the Jometite Laboratories CR 610 speaker system. We regret the error.

(Continued on page 18)

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS LISTEN.

THE SANSUI 900 SUPER SYSTEM.

Just listen.

Your ears will tell you immediately. Here is sound that's just about as good as it gets. And your eyes will tell you here's styling that's a cut above the rest.

But best of all, here is a sensibly priced complete system of high performance separates that is as easy to use as it is to buy.

All you have to do is plug it in — and enjoy.

C-77 Control Center/Preamplifier with Automatic Fader and Moving Coil Pre-Preamp Unique in offering full stereo mixing with the convenience of an automatic and manual fader for smooth, professional sounding transitions from any connected source to any other, plus a built in pre-preamp for moving-coil cartridges. Variable loudness control.



B-77 LINEAR-A DC Servo Power Amplifier with Spectrum Analyzer and Peak Power Meter. Sensibly rated at 60 watts/channel, min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms from 20-20,000Hz, with no more than 0.03% THD. Direct-coupled throughout, it features Sansui's exclusive new "Linear A" circuitry for low distortion with high efficiency, along with separate 10-band spectrum analyzer and peak power displays that show just what your system is doing.

T-77 Quartz-PLL Digital Synthesizer FM/AM Tuner with 8 Preset FM/AM Stations and Auto Search Digital Quartz-PLL Synthesizer design, which guarantees the most accurate tuning possible, is the highlight of this extraordinary tuner. Stores up to 8 stations in memory circuits for instant recall.

This system also has a direct/



drive automatic-return FR-D3 turntable with its slow 0.023% wow/flutter and 72dB S/N ratio.

The attractive audio rack that contains the 900's components has additional space for an optional Sansui metal-tape compatible cassette deck.

Also included are two S-50 12", 3-way loudspeakers specially designed to perfectly match the system's components and fill your listening room with an uncanny amount and quality of music.

If you love great high fidelity, but don't have the patience for a lot of shopping and technical talk, you'll want to see and hear the Sansui 900 Super System. Visit your Sansui dealer and find out how



easy it is to own a top-of-the-line high fidelity system.

The Sansui 900 Super System. All you have to do is listen.

SUPERCOMPO

Sansui

SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

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SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan
SANSUI AUDIO EUROPE S.A., Antwerp, Belgium
In Canada: Electronic Distributors

CIRCLE NO. 49 ON READER SERVICE CARD

"MOVING-COIL VIRTUES WITHOUT THE HASSLES"

That's the way High Fidelity characterized the Adcom Crosscoil XC-LT in their New Equipment Reports, July 1980 and went on to say,

"Frequency response was among the flattest we've measured... and channel balance was within $\pm 1/4$ (dB), typical of today's best pickups."

"Resonance is at a comfortable frequency... and even more important, is extremely well damped."

"Tracking ability also is a match for the best we've tested."

"...the ultimate virtue in a pickup: sonic unobtrusiveness."

And this is what Consumer's Guide Stereo and Tape Equipment, June 1980 said,

"...it sounds superbly detailed and smooth, with no apparent coloration. There is also a lack of noise plus a general ease that can easily make one forget that there is a cartridge between the recording and the listener's ears."

Finally, a critic writing in The Complete Buyer's Guide to Stereo/Hi-Fi Equipment commented,

"The Crosscoil Line-Trace did an absolutely superb job with all types of music."

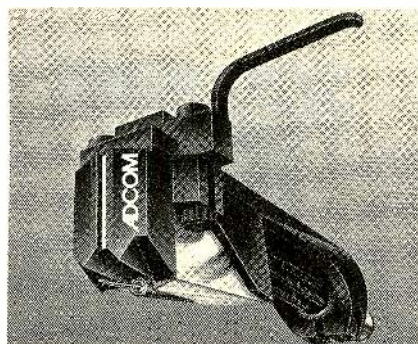
"Sensitivity and flawless tracking under brutal conditions are but two other attributes."

"The Adcom Crosscoil... earn(ed) a permanent place in this reviewer's system."

"...the Adcom cartridge is the best value (sound per dollar) we have ever heard."

For additional information regarding the most cost-effective way to upgrade your component system write:

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New Brunswick, N.J. 08901. U.S.A.



ADCOM CROSSCOIL™

CIRCLE NO. 13 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



Fuji Improves Its Audio Cassettes

□ Besides adopting a new package design for its cassettes, Fuji has made basic changes in the formulation of the cassette tape so as to improve its performance. A newly developed binder is said to provide increased resistance to temperature and humidity variations. The maximum output levels and frequency-response flatness have been improved for the normal-bias FX-I, the high-bias FX-II, and the normal-bias, low-noise FL cassettes (shown). The new FL formulation, for example, provides an increase in dynamic range of 2 dB in the low frequencies and 4 dB at the high end as compared to previous FL tape. The improvements in the other tapes in the Fuji cassette line are of the same order.

At the other end is the economical, modest-size L420 two-way system. Its drivers are a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter and a 7-inch woofer, the latter using the same "Stiffite" cone material as the more expensive ADS systems. The 12-dB-per-octave crossover is at 1,500 Hz. Frequency response of the L420 is 48 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB; nominal impedance is 6 ohms (4 ohms minimum). The system's recommended required amplifier power range is from 15 to 100 watts; a 1-watt input produces a 92-dB sound-pressure level measured at a 1-meter distance. The L420 is 17½ x 11¼ x 7 inches and weighs 16 pounds. The cabinet is natural walnut veneer over particle board with a removable bronze-colored grille. Price: \$149.50 each (available in pairs only).

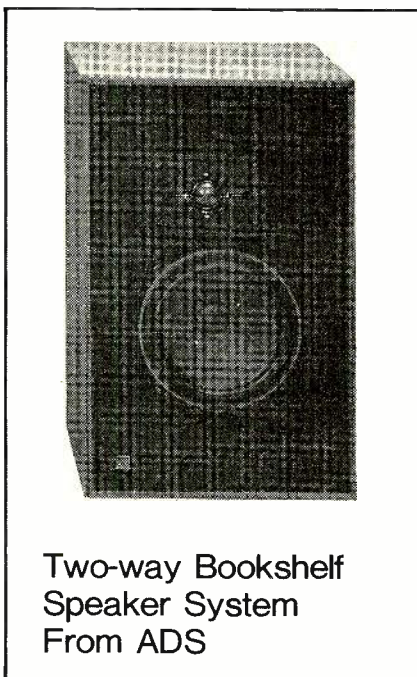
Circle 128 on reader service card



Radio Shack's 50-watt-per-channel Receiver

□ The Realistic STA-960 AM/FM stereo receiver from Radio Shack is rated at 50 watts per channel with no more than 0.05 per cent total harmonic distortion. FM-tuner sensitivity is given as 2 microvolts (11.2 dBf), and the 50-dB-quieting sensitivity in stereo is 3.5 microvolts (16.3 dBf). The unit includes a front-panel tape-dubbing switch to allow two-way tape dubbing without rear-panel connection changes. The receiver has signal-strength and center-channel meters, LED mode indicators, a 25-microsecond FM de-emphasis switch, loudness compensation, and high- and low-frequency filters. There are connections and switching for two sets of loudspeakers. Linear integrated circuits are used in the AM and FM i.f. sections and in the phono-preamp stage. Dimensions are 5⅞ x 19¼ x 14½ inches. Price: \$399.95.

Circle 129 on reader service card



Two-way Bookshelf Speaker System From ADS

□ A broad range of new speaker systems available from ADS is headed by the \$1,900, 190-pound Professional Monitor.

NOTICE: All product descriptions and specifications quoted in these columns are based on materials supplied by the manufacturers.

Domestic inflation and fluctuations in the value of the dollar overseas affect the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that prices quoted in this issue are subject to change.



Zero tracking error, 0.025% wow
and flutter, -78 dB rumble and it
even plays upside down.

It's Technics SL-10 and it represents the most radical departure in turntable design since Technics first introduced the modern direct-drive turntable in 1969.

Not much bigger than a record jacket, the SL-10 combines a quartz-locked direct-drive motor, a servo-controlled linear-tracking tonearm and a moving-coil cartridge, complete with a built-in pre-preamp.

To play a record, simply place it on the platter, close the cover and push the start button. The SL-10's micro-computer automatically senses the record size and speed.

In addition to providing zero tracking error, the gimbal-suspended linear tonearm is dynamically balanced allowing you to play the SL-10 on its side or even upside down with no loss in accuracy or tracking ability.

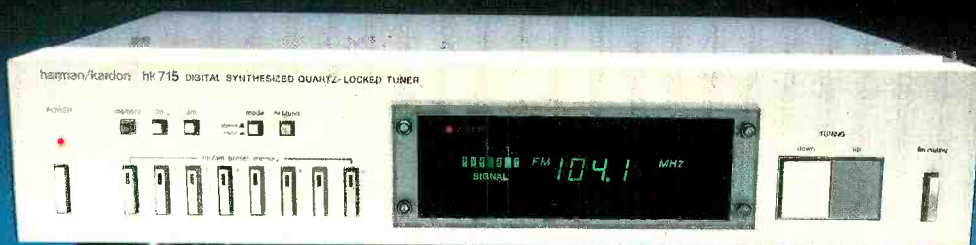
Another reason for the SL-10's outstanding accuracy is its moving-coil cartridge. With its built-in pre-preamp, coreless twin-ring coils and pure boron pipe cantilever, the cartridge provides an extremely linear and flat frequency response as well as superb dynamic range.

Technics SL-10. The world's most unique turntable.

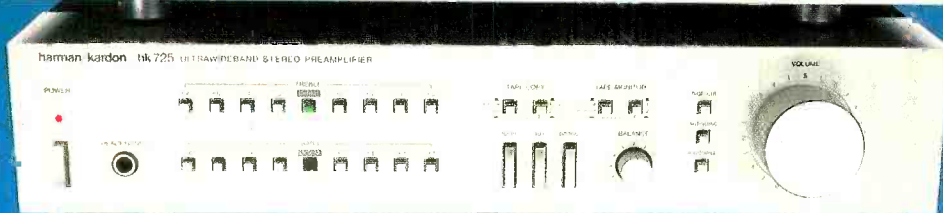
Technics
The science of sound

CIRCLE NO. 61 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Our first low negative feedback components were designed for the audiophile.



The hk715 High Technology quartz locked digital tuner.



The hk725 High Technology preamplifier.



The hk770 High Technology 65 watt per channel power amplifier.



The hk710 High Technology phase locked analog tuner.



The new hk750 High Technology 45 watt per channel integrated amplifier.

Last January, we introduced our 700 series High Technology Separates. The first moderately priced separates designed with low negative feedback.

Negative feedback?

It's a form of electronic compensation used in virtually every preamplifier, amplifier and receiver. Used judiciously, negative feedback can improve frequency response and THD

distortion characteristics. Unfortunately, most manufacturers try to reduce THD to lower and lower levels by adding more and more negative feedback – typically 60-80 dB. This excess negative feedback results in a new form of distortion called Transient Intermodulation Distortion (TIM), which does far more to degrade music than THD. In fact, according to a listening survey, TIM in music is detectable at

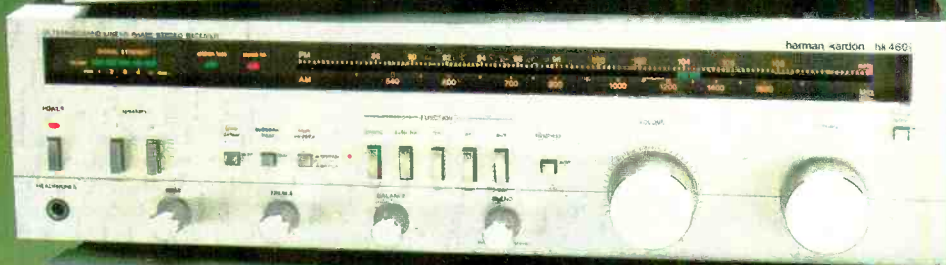
levels just 1/10 the detectable levels of THD.

By keeping negative feedback to 30 dB or less in all Harman Kardon electronics, we've eliminated the harsh, metallic, grating effects of TIM produced by conventional equipment with high negative feedback. You'll hear startlingly clean, clear, open sound.

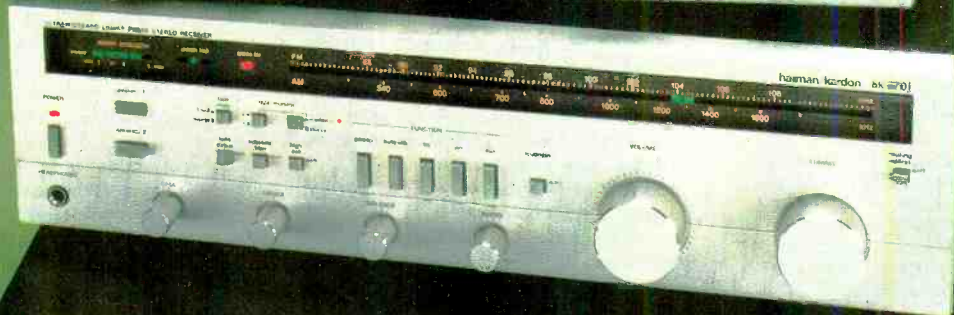
Now everyone can afford to be an audiophile.



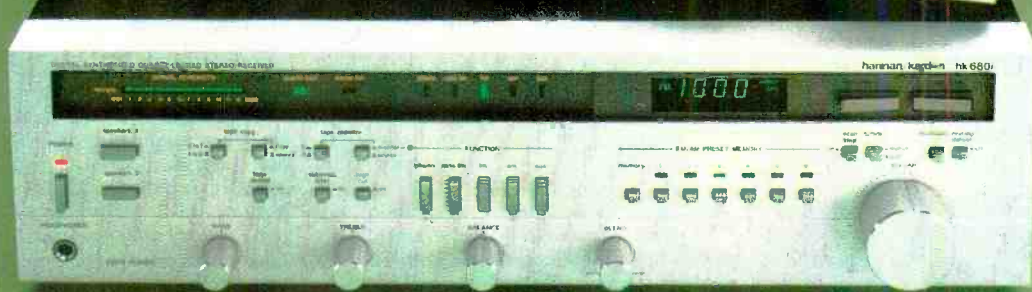
The new hk350i
High Technology
20 watt per
channel receiver.



The new hk460i
High Technology
30 watt per
channel receiver.



The new hk570i
High Technology
45 watt per
channel receiver.



The new hk680i
High Technology
60 watt per
channel receiver.

Now low negative feedback comes in an integrated amp and four receivers.

Not everyone could afford our original system of separates. Or needed the flexibility it offered. So we've expanded our High Technology Series to include a new 45 watt per channel integrated amplifier and four new receivers ranging from 20 to 60

watts per channel*.

In addition to low negative feedback, all feature our Ultra-wideband designs for clearer, more precise stereo imaging. And our new receivers as well as our new integrated amp are all built with an extremely high instantaneous current capability. Which means they can deliver more than twice their power ratings when transients demand it.

*20-20,000 Hz into 8 ohms @ 0.09% (or less) THD.

For all the technological advances you get with our low negative feedback components, you might expect to give up convenience features. Or pay a premium price.

But you don't.

So now you can have the best sound money can buy. No matter how much you have to spend.

harman/kardon

240 Crossways Park West, Woodbury, NY 11797
Toll free: 1-800-528-6050, ext. 870

CIRCLE NO. 26 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Interface: C

Series II It sounds like music.

Interface: C Series II is the fulfillment of our six-year association with optimally vented speakers based on the theories of A.N. Thiele—speaker designs first introduced by Electro-Voice in 1973. The Interface: C offers you a unique combination of high efficiency and high power capacity—the only way to accurately reproduce the 120+ dB peak sound pressure levels found in some types of live music.

The SuperDome™ tweeter, an E-V exclusive, and the VMR™ vented midrange driver, the first to apply optimally vented design to mid frequencies, ensure your music is reproduced without the coloration normally found in other high-efficiency drivers. An honest 30 Hz low end totally eliminates the need for expensive subwoofer assemblies.

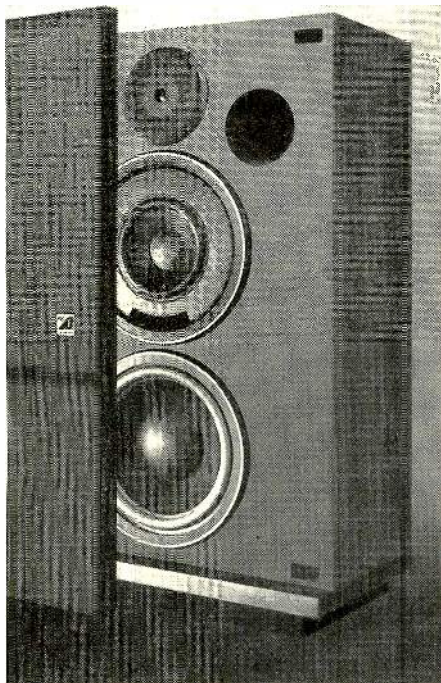
When you spend \$1,000 for a speaker system, get your money's worth. Audition the Interface: C Series II at your nearest Interface dealer. If you want a speaker that sounds like music, the Interface: C Series II is the one you'll buy.



Electro-Voice®

a gulton company

600 Cecil Street, Buchanan, Michigan 49107



Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein

Technical Director Klein taking instruction in the operation of the Fourier analyzer used by KEF.



Ellen M. Klein

Equalizing by Ear?

Q. *I am thoroughly confused! Consumer Reports states, in a July 1979 article on equalizers, that equalization is not to be done by ear but by a combination of a test record and a professional sound-level meter. And STEREO REVIEW's May 1980 test report on the Audio Control C-101 equalizer/analyzer clearly states (on page 48) that the use of various records and test instruments "eliminates the notoriously untrustworthy human ear from the process" of equalizing your equipment.*

Then I read your April 1980 article by Donald Sheffield on equalizers, in which he states that "Anyone only moderately interested in technical matters should simply play some music with a wide frequency range, adjust the equalizer by ear, and then mostly leave it alone."

What does an audio amateur do at this point? Certainly I would like to enhance my listening pleasure, but what do I do about equalizing?

BEN FABRIKANT
Westwood, N.J.

A. I'm afraid reader Fabrikant has entered an area where informed "experts" honestly disagree. As some of my previous answers to equalizer questions may suggest, I am very much a partisan of those multiknobbed boxes and feel my system would be incomplete without one. I do not normally use equalization (EQ) to correct my speaker/room performance, simply because I can achieve almost all of what I want by careful speaker placement and by adjustment of the speaker's midrange and tweeter controls. (True, there's a hefty 55-Hz or so standing-wave "bump" in the middle of my listening room, but I don't find it audibly troublesome enough to equalize away.)

What I do use my octave-band equalizer for is "correction" of program material, sometimes to taste (as with disco), at other times with the intention of making the sound more "real." In my room, with my equipment, the doctoring required for improved program reality usually consists of boosting or depressing the high-frequency range from about 8,000 Hz on up and, more rarely, adding a little 70-Hz boost.

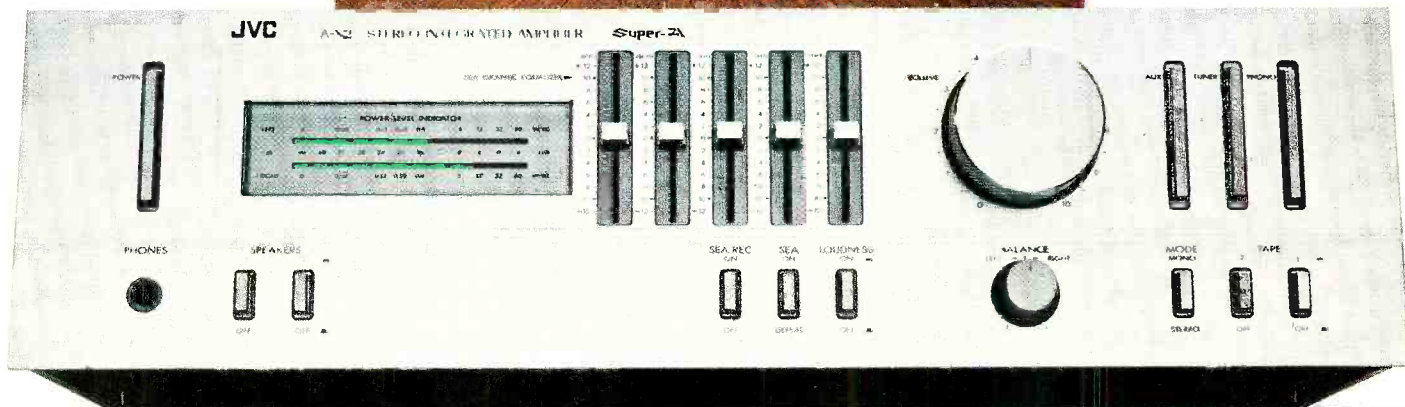
I'm sure that my distinction between EQing to taste and EQing for reality will bother many readers philosophically, so it's worth discussing. After all, how do I know exactly what the original sonic reality was like? I don't, but since in any case it is impossible to play back a sonic event through speakers with total fidelity to the original, I'm not terribly concerned about exact replication of a specific one-time reality. As I've said before, most recently in the August 1980 issue, the very best that can be done is to create a plausible sonic illusion that the listener is in the presence of a live performance. I find that a properly adjusted equalizer can sometimes help move a sound system in that direction by correction of some "unnatural" frequency-response balance originating in the room acoustics, playback equipment, or the original recording. But, in the absence of proper instruments, you need a trained ear both to hear where the problems are and to know what equalizer settings will alleviate them.

While we're on the subject, I recently spent an evening playing with a prototype of dbx's microprocessor-controlled automatic equalizer/analyzer. At the push of a few buttons, it will (1) produce pink noise to be fed through your system, (2) pick up the pink noise with a calibrated microphone and display the resulting equipment/speaker/room curve on a real-time analyzer, (3) automatically adjust its octave-wide equalizer function in 0.1-dB steps to flatten out the system response and hence the displayed curve, (4) store the equalizer setting in one of ten memories for future use, and (5) average any number of equalizer settings derived from different microphone positions to provide an overall composite balance. (Other features and functions will be discussed at another time.)

On the basis of the one evening spent with this equalizer, I came to a few new tentative conclusions and had several old ones reinforced. The real-time analyzer confirmed that, by and large, I can tell flat response on program material when I hear it—and in general that's what I prefer. The frequency balance that I had established by ear using the tweeter and midrange controls on my speakers corresponded reasonably well with measured flat response in the

(Continued on page 24)

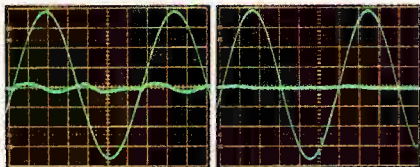
We don't charge extra for brilliant engineering. JVC Super-A.



Super-A A-X2 Integrated Amplifier

For years, audiophiles have praised the purity, depth and naturalness of Class-A amplifiers.

But they haven't been wild about the heat, weight, power limitations and high cost that go hand-in-hand with Class-A's low efficiency and high idling currents. That's why Class-A has remained a rare, esoteric design



Class-AB Jagged center line indicates switching distortion.

JVC Super-A Minimal distortion in output waveform.

chosen by the few who were willing to pay for its fidelity and put up with its limitations.

JVC Super-A design brings together the purity of Class-A and the efficiency of the more common Class-AB. By eliminating most of the measurable switching and crossover distortion, Super-A achieves the kind of sound that has distinguished Class-A designs of the past.

At the same time, Super-A is as efficient as Class-AB, so there are no heat and weight problems which also drive up the cost of conventional Class-A. And JVC Super-A amplifiers have no transient intermodulation distortion (TIM) thanks to very wide bandwidth

capabilities. What's more, the A-X2 Super-A amplifier shown here includes a 5-band graphic equalizer for both normal playback and recording EQ, LED power meters, "direct power supply" which yields high damping factor at all frequencies, and JVC's Triple Power Protection system.

All this comes with plenty of power behind it: *40 watts per channel continuous (RMS) power into 8 ohms, from 20-20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.007% total harmonic distortion.* When you put everything together, and compare our power and price with the competition, you'll discover you're getting the benefits of Super-A and graphic equalization practically for nothing.

JVC®

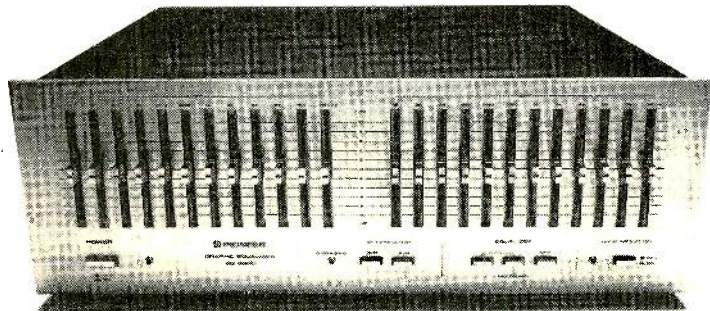
US JVC CORP.

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CIRCLE NO. 63 ON READER SERVICE CARD

THE EQUALIZER THAT HAS NO EQUAL.

If you think that all stereo equalizers are created equal, you probably haven't heard Pioneer's new SG-9800. Because while most equalizers are not built to handle extended frequency response, sharp transients and high slewing rates, Pioneer's SG-9800 is. The SG-9800 has low-noise $\pm 1\%$ metal-film resistors for more precise equalization. And low-error $\pm 2\%$ polypropylene capacitors for superior audio characteristics. And instead of wires, the SG-9800 has a computer-designed circuit board that eliminates distortion caused by wiring in the signal path. The result is an unheard of distortion level of .006%. Which just goes to prove that some equalizers are more equal than others.



SYSTEM ENHANCERS

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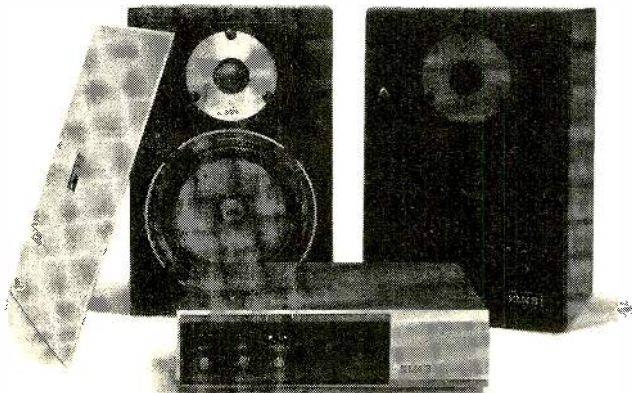
PIONEER
We bring it back alive.

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TAKE HOME A PAIR OF KLH-3's WITHOUT PAYING FOR THEM.

For a limited time, participating KLH dealers will let you take home a pair of the new, widely acclaimed, computer-controlled KLH-3's for a free home trial. Try them out in your own home and compare them to the speakers you have now. You'll soon find that these tiny little speakers will outperform conventional speakers up to 4 times their size. **FREE ALBUM OFFER.** You'll also receive Sheffield Lab's latest direct-to-disc recording "Growing up in Hollywood Town" featuring Amanda McBroom singing her Golden Globe award winning song "The Rose." Free. Whether you keep the speakers or not. So head for your nearest KLH dealer. Take home the KLH-3's without paying for them. And keep the album just for listening. For your nearest KLH dealer, call 800-225-6042. In Mass., 800-532-9566.

KLH



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CIRCLE NO. 36 ON READER SERVICE CARD

room. (There was an unresolved question as to whether a truly flat response on the high end sounded best; most engineers will tell you that it won't. The question was unresolved because I had no way of knowing the exact recorded frequency balance of the records I was using. Some sounded too bright; most were just right.)

The usual listening room has measurable standing-wave dips and peaks of 5 to 10 dB or more right up through the midrange frequencies, and changing the position of the measurement microphone by a foot or so will produce an entirely different response curve. I moved my head through the locations where some of the jagged response peaks were measured and could barely hear the effect on the pink noise. My experience has been that deviations that are barely audible on white or pink noise are likely to be totally inaudible on music. However, there are still some unresolved questions in my mind about the appropriateness of using *one* microphone, even in several positions, to analyze what our *two* ears hear and whether the human hearing system—unlike the dbx analyzer—may not be stressing, ignoring, or weighting various factors related to psychoacoustics—the arrival times of direct and reflected sounds, signal-amplitude effects, frequency masking, and so forth. It should be clear that my reservations are certainly not directed toward the dbx device, since it is obviously a wonderful home-acoustics research tool aside from its other intended professional uses.

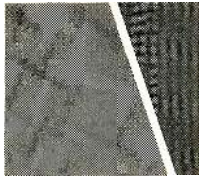
201 Whats?

Q. *Some amplifier manufacturers seem to abhor round numbers. That's the only reason I can come up with to explain the use of such ratings as "201 watts per channel" on some recent power amplifiers. Or is there another explanation?*

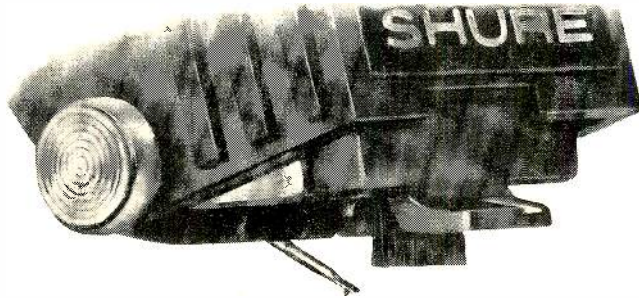
RICKY JOWETT
Portland, Ore.

A. Yes, there is. The FTC, in its rule-making wisdom, decided that audio consumers are likely to be terribly misled if manufacturers specify an amplifier's *total* power available from both channels instead of watts per channel. This rule was promulgated despite the fact that it had been normal practice to rate amplifiers by the total power since the early days of stereo. The FTC also made it *verboten* to give a product a model number equivalent to the sum of the power ratings of each channel. In other words, a 200-watt-per-channel amplifier may *not* be called a Model X-400, for example. However, if a manufacturer specifies his amplifier at 201 watts per channel, the letter of the rule is observed when he calls it the model NA-400. A model number such as M-402, however, would theoretically put that manufacturer in violation of the law. Make sense? Yes? No?

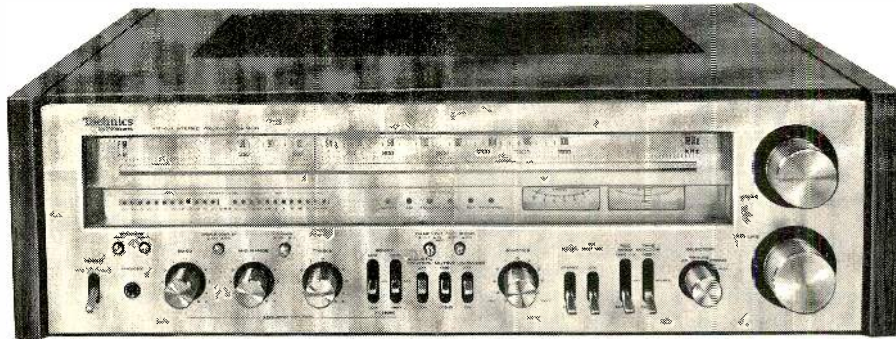
Because the number of questions we receive each month is greater than we can reply to individually, only those letters selected for use in this column can be answered. Sorry!



**fact:
calling this a "brush"**



is like calling this a "radio"



we call it a Dynamic Stabilizer

...critics call it a major innovation

True, the device on the front of a V15 Type IV cartridge bears a superficial resemblance to a cleaning brush.

In reality, it is a complex, exquisitely engineered subassembly which performs several complex functions that measurably enhance the quality of record reproduction!

Each one of its 10,000 conductive carbon fibers is positively grounded to discharge ever-present static electricity from the surface of your records. This eliminates static clicks and pops, as well as the tracking distortion produced by the varying electrostatic attraction between the record surface and the tone arm.

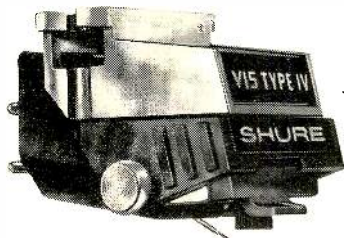
What's more, the Dynamic Stabilizer incorporates Shure-developed viscous damping that results in a uniquely efficient suspension system which maintains precise cartridge-to-record distance and uniform tracking

force—even on severely warped records. The stabilizer also acts as a shock absorber to cushion the stylus in case you accidentally drop the tone arm onto the record.

Finally, the tiny carbon fibers are so fine that 10 of them can fit *inside* a single groove to sweep free minute dust particles.

This integrated approach to pure sound reproduction extends throughout the design of the V15 Type IV. It sets a new standard of high trackability at ultra-low tracking forces—even on records that are warped, dusty, and charged with static.

If faithful reproduction of *all* your recordings is of paramount importance to you, we invite you to audition the V15 Type IV with the Dynamic Stabilizer. Or, write for the complete story (ask for AL569).



V15 Type IV...the stabilized cartridge



Shure Brothers Inc., 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60204, In Canada: A. C. Simmonds & Sons Limited
Manufacturers of high fidelity components, microphones, sound systems and related circuitry.

CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Basics

By Robert Greene



WHAT'S IN A NAME

MOST audiophiles don't need to be told that the AR logotype stands for Acoustic Research, that JBL means James B. Lansing, or that GE is General Electric. We know what those abbreviations mean as well as we know what IRS means. There are some company names, though, whose meanings or derivations rarely, if ever, appear in print. So, I decided to play detective and can now let you in on what such names as Ampex, KEF, TDK, and others are all about.

Most of the names I'll be discussing are simply combinations of letters, but some are acronyms, words made from initial letters or parts of other words. Ampex is one of these; the company was founded by Alexander M. Poniatoff, and the suffix, *ex*, is from the word excellence. Not very complicated, but not something one sees every day. Teac is another acronym, the four letters deriving from Tokyo Electro Acoustical Company. And while we're in the neighborhood, there's TDK, or Tokyo Denki Kagaku, which translates roughly to Tokyo Electronics and Chemical Co., a fair enough description of a recording-tape maker. Two other organizations known in audio largely for manufacture of recording tape are 3M and BASF, and both names are simplifications of much longer ones. The three Ms were originally Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing; that's not too difficult, but the original of BASF was perhaps a bit much. The original name of the German chemical firm was Badische Anilin und

Soda Fabrik (Anilyn and Soda Factory in Baden). Like 3M, the company in time branched out into other activities and countries, the name was no longer entirely applicable, and so it was shortened to the four letters we now know. Incidentally, they aren't intended to be pronounced as a word but as the four individual letters.

Another name that isn't intended to be pronounced as a single word is B.I.C., originally British Industries Corporation (formerly the importers of Wharfedale speakers and Garrard record players). If you say the name as a single word rather than spelling it out (Bee, Eye, Cee), you're talking instead about the company that makes ballpoint pens and disposable razors.

The origin of B&W (the British speaker company) was a retail audio shop owned by two gentlemen named Bowers and Wilkins. In addition to selling equipment, they produced custom-made loudspeaker systems; these were successful enough for John Bowers to start a business devoted to the manufacture of speakers, and, even though Wilkins was not involved in this, it was named B&W Electronics, which was eventually changed to B&W Speakers.

KEF, another British loudspeaker maker, has given me dual stories regarding the origin of its rather unusual name, the second being perhaps more entertaining than the first. Company officials told me that KEF was chosen because it is pronounceable in a recognized way in virtually any language (it forms a real word only in Dutch). Once hav-

ing said that, though, they pointed out that the company was established on the grounds of an enterprise called the Kent Engineering Foundry. While the neighborhood tradespeople knew nothing of Raymond Cooke, founder of the new organization (or of loudspeakers, for that matter), they did know of KEF and were not only willing to do business but to offer credit, a clear advantage to a new business!

TWO more British contributions: BSR was originally Birmingham (and later British) Sound Reproduction; eventually the whole thing was dropped in favor of the simple three-letter designation. SME, the name of a tone arm distributed in this country by Shure, originally stood for Scale Model Engineering; this, too, has now been pared down to just the three letters.

The name Dual (record players and cassette decks) looks as if it might be an acronym. It isn't. The word was added to the name of the German company Gebrüder Steidinger (that is, Steidinger Brothers) in 1928 when they produced the first reliable turntable motor capable of operating on either spring (remember wind-up phonographs?) or electric power—a *dual* motor. Back in the U.S.A., dbx states that its president's being named David Blackmer is just a coincidence; the db in dbx stands for decibels and the x for "expanded."

The experiences of the audio industry's peripatetic Henry Kloss constitute something of a continuing adventure in company names. Originally associated with AR, Kloss left and formed another speaker company, KLH (Kloss, Low, and Hofmann). His interests eventually turned elsewhere once again and he left KLH. The word "advent," suggestive of a new beginning, appealed to Kloss, so he adopted it as the name of his new venture in the video/audio field. He has since begun yet another new group for manufacture of projection-TV equipment, Kloss Video Corporation, and I suspect that it won't be long before we start hearing of "KVC."

I'll throw in one partly because I'm an old-movie buff, though the company in question is also active in audio by way of tape manufacture and broadcasting: RKO. If you remember the old movie symbol of a transmitter perched on top of a globe, dah-ditting a message into the Hollywood ether, you may also recall that it was used by a company called simply Radio Pictures. This organization merged with two theater chains, Keith and Orpheum, following the then common practice of putting production and distribution in one corporate pot, and so RKO.

FINALLY, here's perhaps the most unlikely one of the lot. A chain of discount stores in the New York area uses XAM as a private-label brand name. It got started some years ago with their speaker line. XAM, then, must bear some obscure relationship to speakers, right? Well . . . no. The then audio manager of the store had a pair of Siamese cats. They were named Sam and Alice. In the fullness of time, as cats will do, Sam and Alice had kittens. One of these was named Max. Max has now gone to his reward, but his memory is kept alive by his name appearing on thousands of pieces of equipment—spelled backward. □



"...an outstanding product on any absolute scale of measurement without regard to price." -STEREO REVIEW



Read more of what Stereo Review magazine had to say about the Yamaha CR-840 receiver:

"The harmonic distortion of the CR-840 was so low that without the most advanced test instruments it would have been impossible to measure it."

When speaking of the OTS (Optimum Tuning System), an easy-to-use Yamaha feature that automatically locks in the exact center of the tuned channel—for the lowest possible distortion, Stereo Review said, "The muting and OTS systems operated flawlessly."

Among Yamaha's most significant features is the continuously variable loudness control. By using this control, the frequency balance and volume are adjusted simultaneously to compensate for the ear's insensitivity to high and low frequency sound at low volume settings. Thus, you can retain a natural-sounding balance regardless of listening level. As Stereo Review states, "...another uncommon Yamaha feature."

And there's more. Like the REC OUT/INPUT SELECT feature. These separate controls allow you to record from one program source while listening to another program source. All without disturbing the recording process. Stereo Review's comment was, "...the tape-recording functions of the CR-840 are virtually independent of its receiving functions." One could not ask for greater flexibility.

In summing up their reaction to the CR-840, Stereo Review said, "Suffice it to say that they [Yamaha] make it possible for a

moderate-price receiver to provide performance that would have been unimaginable only a short time ago."

And the CR-840 is only one example in Yamaha's fine line of receivers. For instance, High Fidelity magazine's comment about the Yamaha CR-640 receiver: "From what we've seen, the Yamaha CR-640 is unique in its price range."

And Audio magazine has remarks on the Yamaha CR-2040 receiver: "Without a doubt, the Yamaha CR-2040 is the most intelligently engineered receiver that the company has yet produced, and that's no small feat, since Yamaha products have, over the last few years, shown a degree of sophistication, human engineering, and audio engineering expertise which has set them apart from run-of-the-mill receivers."

Now that you've listened to what the three leading audio magazines had to say about Yamaha receivers, why not listen for yourself? Your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer is listed in the Yellow Pages.



To obtain the complete test report on each of these receivers, write: Yamaha International Corp., Audio Division, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622.

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Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Knocked-out Cassette

Q. *Some time ago I bought a prerecorded cassette through a record club, and I subsequently purchased the LP version from the same source because the cassette was so bad. I tried to re-record the disc onto the tape, but I found that while the original cassette got erased and the VU meters on my deck indicated a normal level for dubbing, nothing was recorded! Can you explain how that could happen?*

RICHARD ROSETTI
New York, N.Y.

A. I wish Mr. Rosetti—and other readers who submit questions—had mentioned the specific cassette deck being used, for while I am obviously not familiar with them all, I do know the characteristics of a reasonable number of them.

Two things might well be borne in mind in this situation. The "obvious" answer to the question is that on the back edge of every cassette there are two plastic "knock-out" tabs which, if removed, are supposed to prevent accidental erasure of an already recorded tape. Philips' licensing standards require cassette-deck mechanisms to respect these knocked-out plastic tabs, but you can intentionally defeat them by putting a piece of cellophane tape over the holes. With this particular deck, however, it appears that the "record" circuits respected the knocked-out spaces (as they should, with any prerecorded tape), but the erase circuitry—for some obscure reason—did not. Frankly, I have never encountered any cassette deck in which the record and erase circuits did not operate simultaneously (if at all): with the tabs (or a covering piece of tape) in place you can erase a previous recording and record a new one; with the tabs missing, you can neither erase nor record. Evidently the present deck is unusual in this respect.

The second point, however, is more general, and it is just as important for other readers who may have a poor-quality cassette recording and a good-quality LP they wish to preserve by dubbing. Don't use the tape of a prerecorded cassette to try to "improve" the quality of your tape collection. Duplicator tape—as it is called in the trade—is usually of poorer quality than

most blank tape sold in a hi-fi store. If you want to make a good-quality copy of one of your LPs, use a quality cassette, not the commercial-grade tape found in most prerecorded cassettes.

Open-reel Head Wear

Q. *Why don't all open-reel decks use ferrite or Sendust-alloy heads? Many still use the softer permalloy type despite the problem of head wear. Or isn't this a real problem after all?*

DANIEL LARIE
Madison, Wis.

A. Tape-head wear has proved to be a rather minor problem at cassette speed (1 $\frac{7}{8}$ ips), regardless of the head material or the tape formulation (ferric, chromium-dioxide, or metal-particle). Certainly, since all tapes are mildly abrasive—very fine-grain sandpaper, if you will—it is always possible to grind a "wear groove" into the surface of a tape given a long enough running time. Mere water flowing over the rocks produced the Grand Canyon, after all, though it took rather longer than most of us expect to use a tape deck.

As your question implies, however, head wear at open-reel (or, worse still, videotape) speeds is a real problem, especially for relatively "soft" materials such as permalloy. While I have myself never worn out a cassette head before the deck's motor bearings failed, I have worn out numerous heads on open-reel decks. In many cases I have been able to extend the useful life of such heads by "relapping" them: polishing out the tape-wear groove using the Nortronics QM-707 "handylap" kit. (Relapping heads does not require a great deal of physical dexterity, but reinstalling the heads properly does require some test equipment and either professional expertise or a natural flair. If you are interested in relapping, write to the Nortronics Recorder Care Division, 8101 Tenth Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minn. 55427.)

This is not an attempt to duck the direct question of why every manufacturer doesn't "solve" the open-reel head-wear problem by using ferrite or Sendust-alloy heads. The

(Continued on page 30)

HIGH PERFORMANCE HIGH BIAS.



AMPEX GM II HIGH BIAS TAPE.

When you're recording music that's rich in high frequencies, you need a high performance tape. Ampex GM II high bias cassettes. They retain and release every note and nuance. Especially those found in highly amplified electronic music.

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head contact is precise, we use our exclusive Ferrosheen™ calendaring process to give the tape an ultrasmooth, glossy surface.

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catch is that the terms "permalloy," "ferrite," and "Sendust" do not stand for only three specific head materials: they cover dozens of variations with differing magnetic and physical characteristics. It has been very difficult to get clear and unbiased explanations from the manufacturers detailing their reasons for selecting a given head material for a given purpose. What follows is what I believe to be true.

At low magnetic flux levels (the sort encountered by a playback head, not the high levels required for recording metal-particle tape), permalloy-type heads tend to produce less distortion than ferrites or Sendust-alloy types do. Sendust will accept the highest levels before overloading (which is why they're so popular for "metal-ready" cassette decks). Ferrites wear about as well as Sendust and have better magnetic characteristics at low magnetization levels (they fall between permalloy and Sendust in this regard), but they tend to be brittle, flaking off at the microscopic head-gap edges where the real action takes place. So, since open-reel manufacturers don't have to deal with extremely high magnetic flux levels (no one, to my knowledge, is producing a metal-particle open-reel tape or even a CrO₂ type, at least in commercial quantities), permalloy is superior except in respect to wear. And people who are willing to buy open-reel decks would rather replace a head after a couple of years than forgo the magnetic advantages of permalloy—or so think many deck manufacturers.

Distortion Puzzler

Q. Up to about six months ago my cassette deck was fine. Now suddenly, during playback, there is a "break-up" or "raspiness" on certain notes in the middle/high register (with solo trumpets or saxophones). It occurs only when I'm listening through speakers—playback on my cheap headphones is normal. And there's no distortion when I listen to FM or records through the speakers. New heads didn't help. Can you suggest anything else?

LEONARD ROSS
Tampa, Fla.

A. There are several possibilities to check. First, play some tapes you made before the problem developed and compare their playback with that of tapes made recently. If the same problem is evident to the same degree, the recording section of your deck is presumably not the cause of the trouble. If the old tapes play well and only the new ones don't, the likelihood is that the recording bias has drifted lower, causing a high-frequency peakiness, and that the poor high-frequency response of your headphones conceals the problem.

If all tapes exhibit the same problem, including those you know previously did not, the fault is somewhere in the playback system (which includes the deck). Check whether the deck's headphone-output jack has its own amplifier. If so, it might be fed from a point in the deck's playback circuit before the deck's final amplifier stage, where the problem might be. If the sound is good through a set of high-quality headphones, then the problem is definitely in the final amplifier stage. □

STEREO REVIEW

The new FISHER



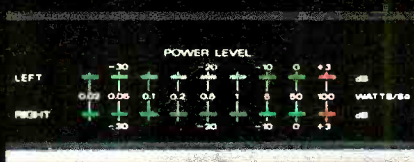
A receiver with advanced digital tuning and Class A-II power amplifier.

Introducing the new Fisher RS270 AM/FM stereo receiver with Quartz Locked digital synthesizer tuning. This drift-free tuning method locks and stays on frequency—what you read on the state-of-the-art digital display is the exact FM station frequency. Digital circuitry eliminates the traditional tuning knob—just a light touch of the tuning bars activates an auto scan station search.

The RS270 remembers your favorite stations. You can select 12 of your favorite stations (6 AM/6 FM) and store them in the RS270's memory for instant access at the touch of a button. It makes listening to your favorite broadcasts more enjoyable, and

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Not just plenty of power. But cleaner power. The RS270 incorporates Fisher's new and exclusive Class A-II power amplifier circuitry. Class A-II is a variable bias circuit that combines



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All the outward signs of the advanced technology inside. The RS270 includes a built-in moving coil cartridge preamplifier so you can enjoy the superior performance of moving coil cartridges without the expense of an accessory preamp. Fisher's exclusive "Panel Logic" display tells you at a glance the RS270's mode of operation.

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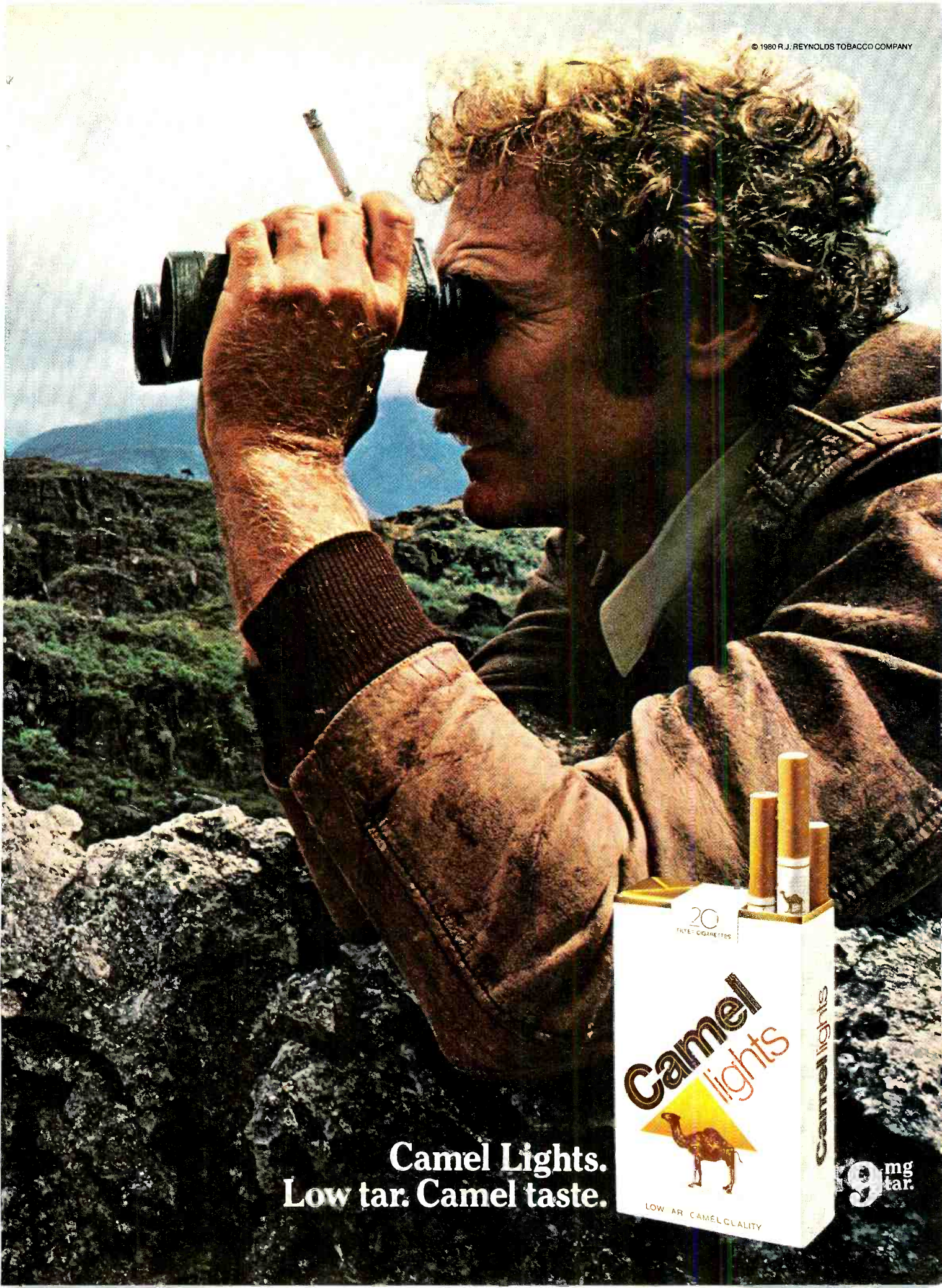
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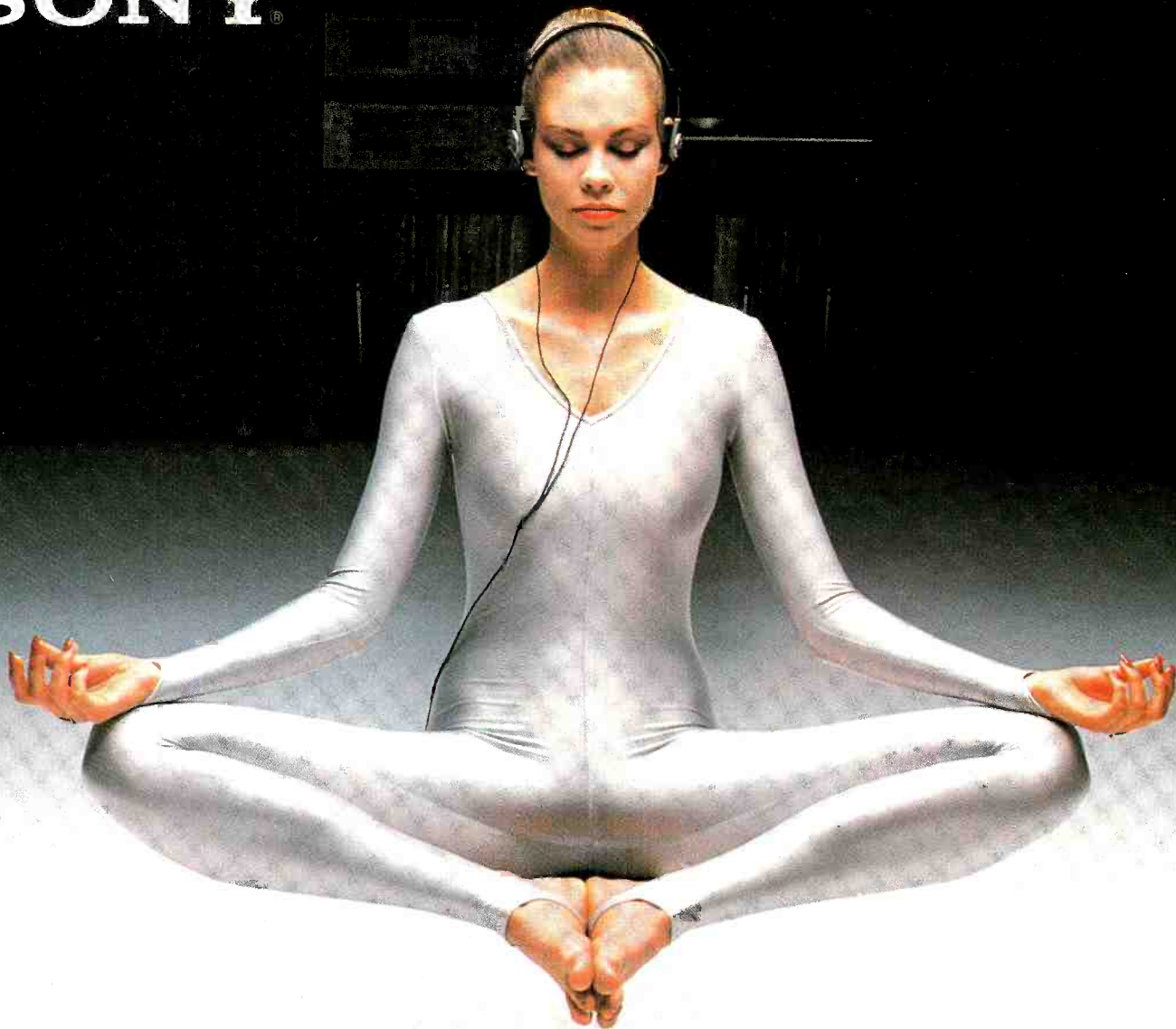


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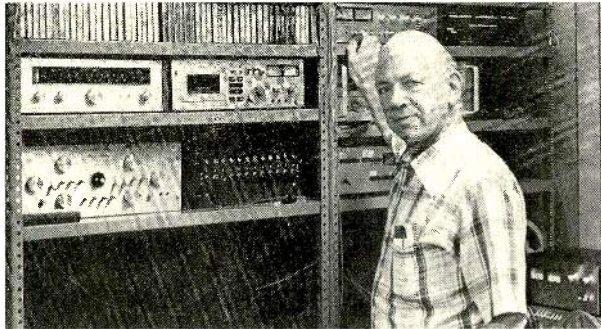
Listen to our new MDR series headphones. They're light. And heavy.

STEREO HEADPHONES
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CIRCLE NO. 51 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



● Hi-Fi Is Getting Better (Part 2) ●

In September's column I discussed the major improvements in amplifier performance that have appeared during the past decade or so and attempted to relate them to audible or other practical benefits to the user. FM tuners have undergone a similar upgrading during that period. But in spite of some impressive advances, I suspect that tuner performance is still not as far beyond "real-world" requirements as is the case with amplifiers—although, given broadcast practices, I doubt that any reasonably good tuner will ever limit the quality of FM reception. A comparison of the performance I had measured on a 1968 amplifier with that of more recent models showed that gratifyingly enormous advances have been made in improving distortion, among other things, so let's see what a similar comparison of tuners, then and now, will reveal.

In 1970, I tested a tuner that in many ways was a logical precursor of the best of today's models. It was advanced for its time, with crystal filters providing an almost ideally shaped i.f. selectivity characteristic as well as permanent alignment (shortly afterward, low-cost ceramic filters made the expensive crystal filters obsolete). This tuner had a high-performance front end whose two tuned FET r.f. stages gave it a 100-dB image rejection, one rivaled by few tuners even now. Most of its other performance specifications would do justice to the better tuners of 1980.

From this, one might infer that there has been little improvement in FM tuners during the past ten years. That is not really

true, although it would be difficult to prove or disprove that statement using only my test data. In 1970 I was still using the Boonton 202B signal generator and Scott stereo modulator, and I could not fully verify the performance ratings of even the better tuners of that time. The distortion of this tuner measured 0.5 per cent, which happened to be the residual level of my test equipment. However, even the manufacturer's measurements on the unit showed a mono distortion of no better than 0.2 per cent and a stereo distortion of 0.5 per cent, hardly what we would expect from a top-ranking tuner today (or even from a medium-price one, for that matter).

The stereo channel separation was about 30 dB, and it was fairly uniform with frequency. Although this falls short of the 45- to 50-dB separation achieved by some current tuners, it is roughly equal to the FCC requirements for channel separation in FM transmitters and is therefore more than adequate for good stereo performance.

The rated usable sensitivity of this tuner was 1.5 microvolts, and in our measurement it was 1.9 microvolts. Sensitivity, as such, has not been a problem in FM tuner performance for decades, and it probably should be ignored when making a buying decision, but old habits die hard and many people seem to equate high overall sensitivity with high quality.

This tuner had a rated alternate-channel selectivity of 60 dB, adequate but far from "super-tuner" performance. Still, 60 dB of selectivity is typical of most medium-price

tuners and receivers today, and in the majority of cases it is completely adequate in home use. This tuner, which in most respects would hold its own against a good 1980 tuner, sold for \$250 in 1970, equivalent to perhaps \$500 today.

As it happens, I still have this tuner, and it is used daily. Although I have not retested it with my current instruments, I have often compared it in A-B tests with the latest and best tuners and receivers, and it sounds essentially like any of them. Since it has a ruler-flat frequency response, more than enough channel separation, and reasonably low distortion and noise levels, there is no reason why it should be otherwise. Perhaps if I were faced with the problem of receiving a signal only 400 kHz removed from a much more powerful signal, I might feel the need for greater selectivity, but fortunately that is not a problem at our lab.

THE major difference between this 1970 tuner and the best of today's is its rated distortion, which is two to ten times greater than we would expect from a quality FM tuner today. In discussing amplifiers in September, I pointed out that a typical amplifier distortion was hundreds of times smaller than any program distortions, and thus had no negative sonic effect. To a lesser degree, the same comment applies to tuners. A tuner with 0.5 per cent distortion (which exists only at 100 per cent FM modulation, corresponding to the loudest program peaks) will contribute little to the overall program distortion. A modern tuner with

Tested This Month

Acoustic Research AR93 Speaker System • Apt 1 Power Amplifier
Dual 1264 Record Player • Empire 600LAC Phono Cartridge
Luxman R-3045 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

0.1 per cent distortion should therefore sound no better than my older model, and in general it does not.

There are other distortions far more annoying than mere harmonic or intermodulation distortion. One major problem is interference from SCA programs that are multiplexed on the transmissions of some stations. I hear the "gargling" beats of these signals on my old tuner—but, sad to say, I hear them just as annoyingly on most of the latest tuners as well! Some of this interference may be inherent in the transmission itself, but in any case there does not seem to have been any worthwhile improvement in the ability of worst tuners to reject it.

One of the worst blights on FM reception is multipath distortion. The usual treatment is a good directional antenna, properly oriented to reject signals arriving from unwanted directions, and a tuner with good (low) capture ratio and high AM rejection. The importance of these qualities and how to achieve them in practice were well understood more than thirty years ago. Still, very few tuners seem to have outstanding capture or AM-rejection qualities, and I would say that on the average today's FM tuners are not better than those of a decade ago.

All of this might seem to imply that tuners have not improved a great deal in recent years. That is not correct, for there have been, in my opinion, some very worthwhile advances. Although most of them do not affect audible program quality directly, they can have a lot to do with the day-to-day pleasure of using the tuner.

Remember the days of drifting FM tuners? If you were a hi-fi enthusiast twenty or more years ago, you may recall that frequent tuning touch-ups were an accepted part of the FM reception process. Even tuners with powerful AFC (automatic frequen-

cy control) systems could be drifters, with a lot of the drift arising in the corrective circuits themselves. If a tuner had enough AFC to effectively eliminate drift, the "lock-in" range made its dial calibration worthless. I once had an FM tuner whose dial could be shifted ± 2 MHz after a signal had been acquired without losing it! Even without the "pulling" effect of AFC, FM-tuner dial calibration was rarely better than mediocre, and a combination of skill and luck was usually needed to identify the tuned frequency within 400 kHz.

Today, tuners do not drift. Many of them have frequency-locking circuits that guarantee accurate tuning. The accuracy and readability of most FM dials have been improved, and digitally synthesized tuning is now available in moderately priced tuners. With these, one knows the frequency of the received signal and can have confidence that the station will stay tuned.

Selectivity has been dramatically improved on some of today's better tuners. This does not represent a technological advance, but merely a marketing decision. The genuine technical improvements in tuners have resulted from the development of special-purpose integrated circuits that provide stereo separation and low distortion unrealizable with discrete components at any practical price. I rather doubt that one can hear the difference between 30 and 50 dB of channel separation (even in the unlikely event that the program material has that much separation), but there is certainly no reason why the higher figure should not be made available since it costs no more with today's technology. Another worthwhile advance has been the use of interstation-noise muting circuits (usually part of the integrated circuits in the tuner) that operate without the thumps and noise bursts

that mar the performance of my 1970 tuner. Today, good muting systems are commonplace, but only a few years ago they were exceedingly rare.

My general feeling about tuners is that they are better to some degree than they were in past years. The individual performance improvements are not as dramatic as those of amplifiers, but their combined effect is unmistakable. FM tuners are still considerably better than broadcast program material in respect to frequency response, distortion, noise level, and channel separation. Furthermore, like amplifiers, tuners cost no more in 1980 dollars than they did in 1970 dollars (how many things outside of high-fidelity components can match that?).

PHONO CARTRIDGES have undergone a considerable improvement during the past ten years, but much of it was in the quantum jump in performance made necessary by the development of the CD-4 quadraphonic record system. Prior to that time, most good cartridges had a reasonably flat response up to 15,000 Hz or so, with an output peak near that frequency and a rapid output loss at higher frequencies. The stylus resonance of most good cartridges fell between 15,000 and 20,000 Hz. Tracking forces were about the same as now, in the range of 1 to 2 grams.

The need for a reasonably flat frequency response out to 40,000 or 50,000 Hz for playing CD-4 records resulted in a number of cartridges with greatly reduced effective tip mass, and this placed the high-frequency resonance in the vicinity of the 30,000-Hz CD-4 carrier frequency. In addition to reduced tip mass, it was necessary to develop new stylus shapes (which were often named for their inventors: Shibata, Pramanik, et al.). These styli had contact patterns with the groove walls that enabled them to trace very short recorded wavelengths (high frequencies) and simultaneously distribute the tracking force over a relatively large portion of the groove wall to minimize wear on both the record and the stylus.

Now CD-4 belongs to history, but a legacy is very much with us in the form of the "extended contact" styli used in the top stereo models of virtually every cartridge manufacturer. There has also been a slow but steady downward trend in effective tip mass. Today's better stereo cartridges typically have a response that is nearly flat to 20,000 Hz and beyond, and a stylus-resonance frequency in the 22,000- to 26,000-Hz range is not uncommon. Many cartridges have stylus cantilevers made of exotic materials such as beryllium, boron, carbon fiber, sapphire, and even diamond! These have been chosen in the quest for maximum rigidity and minimum mass. For the same reason (reduced mass), the better cartridges also have nude-mounted diamonds instead of the less expensive but more massive mounting of the jewel in a cup at the end of the cantilever.

All of this certainly represents progress, yet we are a long way from perfection in the phono-reproduction process. There are certain inherent limitations in tracking an analog recorded groove with a physical stylus that make it unlikely that it will ever ap-

(Continued on page 38)



"... Then again, knowing at a glance the inductance of your speaker coils may not be important to you. . . ."

AIWA AD-M800U STEREO CASSETTE DECK

Three heads...and a brain.

Only the very best decks have three heads. But Aiwa's metal compatible deck adds wireless remote control. And a brain... DATA. Aiwa's exclusive, microcomputer Digital Automatic Tape Adaptation.

THE DATA SYSTEM

In less time than it takes to read what DATA does... DATA does it. Set DATA's computer and press START. LEDs begin to flicker. One each for LH, FeCr, CrO₂, and METAL.

DATA's electronic senses analyze the tape and an LED lights up as the others go out. Now you—and DATA—know the kind of tape being used.

Another LED flickers and lights. BIAS is set for best frequency response using a built-in 6 kHz reference signal. The next LED flickers and lights. Dolby* levels are calibrated and set using a 400 Hz reference signal.

Two LEDs remain. One flickers and lights. EQ-M is set... equalization for the mid-range 5-10 kHz. Then the next, EQ-H... equalization for the high, 10-18 kHz range is set.

Further down the panel an LED lights. It's green. OK! You're ready to record. But... if the red LED lights instead, the machine's not wrong. The tape is. Get another tape or switch to manual over-ride.

Once DATA is set, you record with maximum sonic quality, regardless of whose tapes or what type you're using. And DATA stores the tape analyses—at your command—in its memory bank. Four different tapes of your choice.

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You have 3-head performance using linear, ultra-hard sendust heads with Aiwa's exclusive V-cut geometry for contour effect elimination doing away with roughness at low frequencies. And each

head is designed for best performance at its specific function.

Add Double-Dolby*; IC logic controls; dual motor drive; backlit VU meters with 5-step peak reading LEDs; auto-repeat; memory replay; oil-damped eject and more.

The sum of the parts is frequency response of 30-17,000 Hz using metal tape. S/N ratio of 68dB with FeCr, Dolby on. Wow & Flutter 0.04% WRMS.

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CIRCLE NO. 6 ON READER SERVICE CARD

proach the performance quality of the electronic system components. In fact, it is remarkable that phono reproduction sounds as good as it does.

A measurement or listening comparison between any modern cartridge and a good one of ten or fifteen years ago will convince anyone that there have been real advances. And it is a fact that most people cannot hear differences between top-of-the-line cartridges in a really critical A-B test (actually, a true A-B test, with no elapsed time between the comparisons, is difficult to perform with phono cartridges). Even if a dif-

ference is detected in such a test, I would be willing to bet that no one walking into a room with one of them playing could identify which cartridge he was hearing. The differences between good cartridges are simply not of that magnitude, and a large part of any evaluation process is devoted to pushing a cartridge to its limits to find out what those limits are. Below that point, I am convinced that there really are no significant audible differences between top-of-the-line cartridges other than minor frequency-response variations, just as is the case with amplifiers operated below clipping. Please

note that I said *significant*, and remember that your idea of a "significant" difference may well differ from mine! Of course, some differences, audible or not, do result from quality-control or production-consistency problems. And interface difficulties with certain preamplifier input stages may create audible differences that are not inherent in the cartridges themselves.

In columns to come I will review the status of other components of the music system and show how they have evolved with time. □

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



Acoustic Research
AR93 Speaker System

fering "Acoustic Blanket" to reduce side radiation and help maintain steady and positive stereo imaging. The woofer configuration is designed to overcome a phenomenon common to conventional systems in which the woofer's upper-bass output is reflected from the nearby back wall, partially canceling the front radiation and producing a dip in the speaker's acoustic-power output. Placing the woofer cone as close as possible to the adjacent room boundaries (normally the rear wall and floor) moves the cancellation frequency upward. If the crossover from the woofer to the midrange driver takes place below the cancellation frequency, the effect can be eliminated or greatly reduced. By a suitable placement of the midrange driver, its interaction with wall-reflected signals can be shifted below its minimum operating frequency, resulting in a much smoother overall low- and mid-frequency response from the system.

The AR93 has two 8-inch acoustic-suspension woofers operating in a 1.77-cubic-foot volume and crossing over at 350 Hz to a front-mounted 8-inch midrange driver. This speaker is also an acoustic-suspension type in a small sealed subenclosure. The second crossover, at 2,000 Hz, is to a 1 1/4-inch cone tweeter. Ferrofluid is used in its gap to damp resonances and help conduct heat from its voice coil. The mid- and high-frequency speakers are located near the top of the enclosure in a vertical line.

The nominal system impedance of the AR93 is 6 ohms, with a minimum of 4.5 ohms. It is moderately efficient for an acoustic-suspension design, being rated to deliver an 87-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) at a 1-meter distance when driven by 1 watt, yet it can withstand 125 watts of program material continuously without damage. It has no special protective features or fuses, and the level balance between drivers is set in the design of the system; no adjustments are available to the user. Price: \$249.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** As is our usual practice when testing loudspeakers, (Continued on page 40)

FOLLOWING the introduction of their widely acclaimed (and expensive) AR9 speaker system, Acoustic Research applied some of the same technology to the design of several lower-price speakers, of which the latest is the AR93. Together with its near-twin, the AR94, it is part of AR's "High Tech" product line.

In many respects the AR93 resembles a miniature AR9—at about one-third the price. It is a three-way, floor-standing unit, 30 3/8 inches high, 14 inches wide, and 10 3/8 inches deep; it weighs 50 pounds. To obtain maximum performance per dollar, AR has made no attempt to give the AR93 the appearance of a piece of furniture. It is all black, its four sides being covered by an acoustically transparent cloth "grille," and there are molded black plastic caps on its top and bottom. The bottom molding serves

as a low pedestal and hides the connecting binding posts beneath the unit.

The enclosure is ruggedly built of particle board, sprayed flat black but otherwise unfinished. The grille resembles an oversize stocking that slips over the cabinet and ties snugly at the top with a drawstring. The plastic top cap, which screws on to the wooden top, conceals the draw-string end of the grille cloth. To prevent the thin, hollow plastic piece from buzzing against the cabinet top, its center is firmly pressed against, and damped by, a piece of rubber fastened to the wooden cabinet top.

Some of the principal design features of the AR9 which have been carried over into the AR93 include its pair of low-mounted, side-firing woofers and a symmetrical vertical array of mid- and high-frequency drivers that are surrounded by a sound-absorb-

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Delco-GM Sound...a moving experience.



we measured the far-field response of a pair of AR93s (one at a time, in a normal stereo configuration) at a distance of about 12 feet in a normal listening environment and measured the woofer response with a close-spaced microphone to eliminate room effects. The first curve, after correction for known absorption and response characteristics of the room and microphone, was spliced to the second to form a composite frequency-response curve. In the case of the AR93, the two curves could be joined without ambiguity at about 350 Hz.

The frequency response of the AR93 was very flat through most of the audible range, with the output increasing by about 5 dB both at the low frequencies (70 Hz) and at the top end of the range (18,000 Hz). The overall variation was ± 3.5 dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz, or ± 2 dB from 85 to 11,000 Hz.

The bass distortion was quite low, as is typical of AR systems, measuring only 0.2 per cent at 100 Hz with a 1-watt input. It increased to 0.28 per cent at 70 Hz and 3.2 per cent at 40 Hz. When we drove the speaker at a 10-watt level, the distortion was 0.53 per cent at 100 Hz and 7.5 per cent at 40 Hz. The measured sensitivity of the AR93 was almost exactly as rated, with an 88-dB SPL produced at a 1-meter distance when we drove the speaker with 2.83 volts (1 watt into 8 ohms).

The system impedance met AR's ratings also, with a minimum of 4.5 ohms occurring

at 20 Hz and between 100 and 200 Hz. The maximum impedance was 10 ohms at 50 Hz and about 12 ohms between 2,000 and 3,000 Hz. The average value over the audio range was about 6 ohms. The tone-burst response of the AR93 was considerably better than average, both in its freedom from ringing or other distortions and in its relative independence from critical microphone positioning. The tweeter dispersion was very good, with its directivity above 10,000 Hz resembling that of a typical dome tweeter rather than a small cone.

● **Comment.** AR recommends placing the AR93 as close as possible to the rear wall and well away from side walls of the room. Alternatively, it can be moved at least 2 feet from the back wall, which may slightly reduce its low-bass output but will retain the inherently smooth mid-bass response of the system. We used both placements with good results, although in our room the near-to-the-wall location tended to overemphasize the bass and we preferred to use the speakers about 3 feet out from the rear wall.

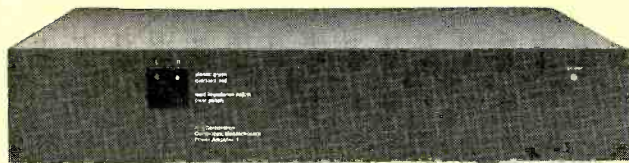
The sound of the AR93 is obviously smooth and well integrated, and it has the familiar AR quality of not seeming to have any bass output until the program calls for it (that might seem to be an obvious requirement for a good loudspeaker—and it is—but there are a number of systems at all price levels that manage to sound heavy or

bassy even when the program material does not call for that quality). The extreme highs (above 10,000 Hz) are noticeably emphasized when the sound of the AR93 is compared with that of certain other fine speakers recognized for their flat high-frequency response characteristics. By itself, however, the AR93 does not sound at all bright or edgy; it is simply a full-range speaker, amply endowed at both ends of the audible spectrum, but with a very flat and musical overall sound.

We did not attempt to drive the AR93s to their limits except to verify that they could handle just about anything that a 200-watt amplifier was likely to send their way when playing music. They were equally at home with a 45-watt receiver, indicating that they are very nearly universally applicable.

In our opinion, the AR93 ranks among the finest speakers in or near its price range. With a cost just above that of a budget bookshelf system, this unit comes surprisingly close to matching the sound quality of some speakers costing four or five times as much. If having a piece of fine furniture is not a major goal in your speaker acquisition, the functional and utilitarian AR93 can make it possible for a very modestly priced music system to match or even surpass the sound of one costing many times as much.

Circle 140 on reader service card



Apt 1 Power Amplifier

amplifier can be operated within its linear range at all times. A single red LED glows if the load impedance is low enough to require resetting the impedance-selector switch. The Apt 1 is approximately 17 inches wide, 10¼ inches deep, and 3 inches high. It weighs 22 pounds. Price: \$641.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Apt 1 has a thermal protection circuit unlike any other we have seen. A special temperature-sensitive resistor is part of a voltage divider at the input to each channel. The resistor is mounted on the output-transistor heat sink, and under ordinary conditions it has no effect on the operation of the amplifier. As the heat-sink temperature approaches 85 degrees Celsius (or 185 degrees Fahrenheit), a very high temperature unlikely to occur in normal home operation, the resistance begins to drop, reducing the drive level to the amplifier. Any type of input signal that might cause the amplifier to run excessively hot is thus automatically attenuated as the temperature rises.

During the FTC preconditioning period, the protective circuit began to reduce the gain and eventually we could not drive the amplifier to the output required for our measurements. Since we had found the amplifier to run quite cool when playing music even at high levels, we contacted Apt and they suggested that, for the purposes of our test, the thermal resistors could be removed. After this was done, there were no further difficulties in performing the tests.

The clipping power output at 1,000 Hz
(Continued on page 42)

THE designers of the Apt 1 power amplifier sought to make a product that could deliver its rated performance into real (loudspeaker) loads with music signals instead of being optimized for resistor loads and sine waves. The Apt 1 is rated to deliver 100 watts per channel to either 8- or 4-ohm loads (or 75 watts to 16 ohms) from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.03 per cent total harmonic distortion and 140 watts to 2-ohm loads over the same range with no more than 0.05 per cent distortion. A built-in "strapping" connection converts it to a mono amplifier capable of delivering 200 to 250 watts to loads of 4 to 16 ohms.

An unusual power supply enables the Apt 1 to deliver its rated power to loads of widely differing impedance. Portions of the secondary winding of the power transformer can be connected either in series or in parallel by a toggle switch in the rear of the amplifier, adjusting the d.c. operating voltage

and current available to the output transistors for optimum performance with loads of 8 ohms and higher or with loads between 2 and 4 ohms. As a result, the transistors always operate under safe conditions, and the amplifier's excellent IHF dynamic headroom of 2 to 3 dB is maintained for all load impedances.

Aside from the impedance switch and a pushbutton stereo/mono selector in the rear of the amplifier, the Apt 1 has no controls. The front panel has a red LED POWER pilot light and a display panel that warns of any kind of incorrect operation. Two green LEDs glow when a signal is present at the amplifier inputs. They change from green to red just before clipping occurs. The Apt 1 does not have the usual current-limiting protective circuits, which are notorious for causing audible distortion when driving certain types of inductive speaker loads. However, the fast-acting lights ensure that the

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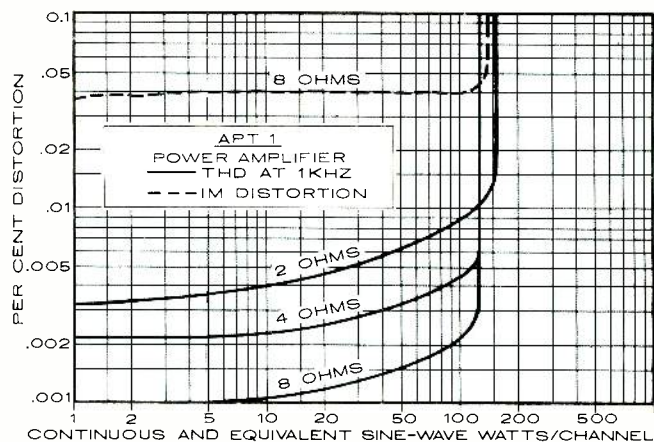
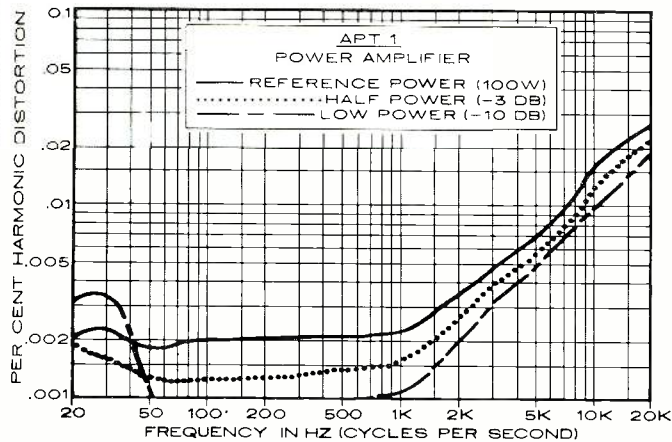
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During the dbx "Best of Both Worlds" promotion, from Sept. 2 until Nov. 30, 1980, you can get a free dbx Model 21 with the purchase of a 3BX Dynamic Range Expander through participating U.S. dbx authorized retailers in continental U.S., Hawaii and Alaska. Also check out the latest releases from the growing DBX DISC CATALOGUE.

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was 130 watts into either 8- or 4-ohm loads (with appropriate settings of the power-supply switch) and 155 watts into 2 ohms. The corresponding IHF clipping-headroom ratings were 1.14 dB for 8 and 4 ohms and 0.44 dB for 2 ohms. With the pulsed IHF test signal, the dynamic-power output was 192 watts into 8 ohms, 181 watts into 4 ohms, and 266 watts into 2 ohms, yielding IHF dynamic-headroom ratings of 2.83, 2.58, and 2.79 dB. We also tried operating the amplifier with its "8-ohm" power-supply setting into 4- and 2-ohm loads. This speedily blew the line fuse in a continuous power measurement, but with the dynamic-power test signal the available output into 4- and 2-ohm loads was, respectively, 312 and 426 watts, corresponding to dynamic-headroom ratings of 4.94 and 4.83 dB. It should be noted that this is *not* a recommended mode

of operation, but it does indicate what can be expected from the Apt 1 with a speaker whose average impedance over the audio range is relatively high but dips to a low value at some frequencies. The red warning light will glow under this condition, although no harm should come to the amplifier with music signals. We also made a measurement in the mono mode with an 8-ohm load; the maximum output was 253 watts for a clipping-headroom rating of 1.02 dB.

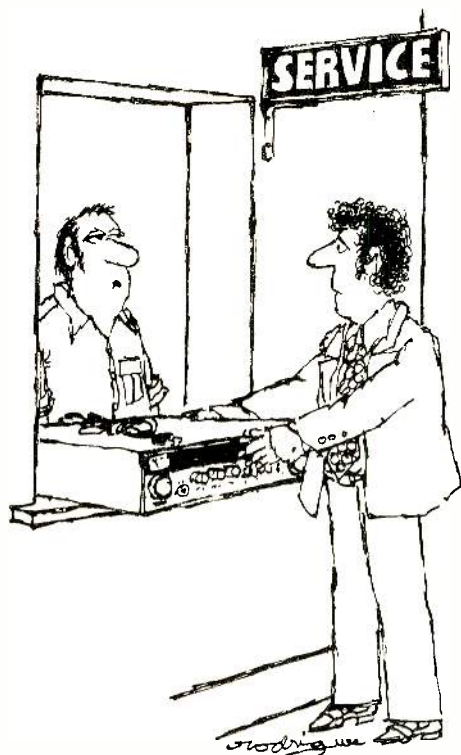
A 92-millivolt signal drove the Apt 1 to a reference output of 1 watt, and the A-weighted noise level was below our measurement capability (better than 89 dB below 1 watt). The 1,000-Hz harmonic distortion was 0.001 per cent or less at most usable power levels, reaching 0.0028 per cent at 120 watts into 8-ohm loads. The unit's

distortion when driving 4 ohms was about 0.0022 per cent up to more than 10 watts output, reaching 0.0045 per cent at 100 watts. Into 2 ohms, the distortion was 0.003 to 0.004 per cent up to 10 watts and 0.009 per cent at 100 watts. The intermodulation distortion (with an 8-ohm load) was an almost constant 0.04 per cent up to more than 130 watts output.

At rated power output (8 ohms) the distortion of the Apt 1 was about 0.002 per cent from 20 to 1,000 Hz; it increased linearly above that frequency to 0.028 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At lower power outputs the characteristic was similar except that the values of distortion were somewhat lower. Frequency response was flat within ± 0.1 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz, and rise time was about 1 microsecond. The IHF slew factor was 10. With a load of 3 microfarads in parallel with 8 ohms, a square wave showed a moderate overshoot and a few cycles of damped ringing, but the amplifier was stable with any load we could devise. The IHF IM distortion, using equal-amplitude test signals at 19,000 and 20,000 Hz, was barely measurable, with the third-order distortion component at 18,000 Hz some 75 dB below an equivalent sine-wave output of 100 watts and a second-order difference tone at 1,000 Hz at a -94 -dB level. (The latter appears to be the residual of our spectrum analyzer, indicating that the amplifier distortion is not measurable with any commercially available instrumentation.)

We tried to measure the IHF transient-recovery time from a 10-dB overload of a 20-millisecond tone burst. The 2-microsecond recovery time we measured was barely detectable and could have been in our test setup. The clipping lights on the amplifier turned red just at the clipping point at low and middle frequencies, and the "low-impedance" load warning came on unflinching when our load was outside the recommended range for the amplifier-switch setting. Full-power clipping tests with both channels driving either 4- or 2-ohm loads usually blew a 4-ampere line fuse, but this would never happen in normal use.

● **Comment.** Much of the design effort that went into the Apt 1 was concerned with its ability to drive reactive (inductive) loads without the spikes and other distortions that
(Continued on page 44)



"... You didn't happen to bring along a Phillips-head screwdriver, did ya? ..."

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can appear in the outputs of some very highly regarded amplifiers having otherwise impeccable conventional test specifications. Lacking a suitable assortment of such amplifiers and speakers for comparison, we could determine only that the Apt 1 drove our available speakers flawlessly right up to the point where the clipping LEDs began to change from green to red. The lights are accurate and fast enough to be truly functional, unlike some of the more cosmetic indicators we have seen on other amplifiers. When the maximum program level causes only an occasional flicker of the green lights, one can safely assume that the amplifier is operating up to, but not beyond, its maximum ratings. This assumption is confirmed by the sound, which never gives any evidence of clipping or other distortions when the lights are green. The red "low-impedance" warning is equally effective, and in combination with the clipping indicators it gives the user of the Apt 1 complete assurance that the amplifier is, as everyone agrees it should be, a truly silent partner in the music system.

A brief comment should be made on the

temperature-sensitive resistors we had to clip out of the amplifier in order to measure its performance. In a strictly legalistic sense, these might seem to run counter to the FTC rules on power-amplifier ratings, since one cannot operate the Apt 1 at one-third rated power for an hour and then make full-power distortion measurements. However, this is a protective feature analogous to a conventional thermal circuit breaker that shuts off all power to the amplifier if it gets too hot. In such a case, the FTC allows cycling of the amplifier until one hour of "on" time has been accumulated. With the Apt technique, the amplifier does not actually shut off, and thus it will not cool down to normal operating temperatures in a reasonable time.

As far as we are concerned, the Apt 1 more than meets the intent of the ruling. This is amply evidenced by the fact that it works perfectly well at its maximum temperature, handily meeting its specifications, with the resistors removed. It is one of the few amplifiers we have tested that can drive any speaker-load impedance at any level within its ratings without distress or distur-

tion, and it has one of the highest IHF dynamic-headroom ratings we have seen in a power amplifier. It is also a safe amplifier, internally protected against any condition that can damage itself or the speakers. Its over-current sensor, which interrupts the outputs with a relay instead of electronically limiting the drive to the output stage, avoids all problems with distortion from the latter method when driving inductive loads.

The instructional and service literature for the Apt 1 is unusually complete and informative. As with the Apt/Holman preamplifier, the Apt 1 specifications are listed in staggering detail in accordance with the current IHF amplifier-test standard, together with notes and comments on test conditions and limitations. The instruction and service manuals are mini-handbooks on state-of-the-art amplifier measurements and reflect the same thoughtfulness and attention to detail that went into the design and construction of the Apt 1 power amplifier itself.

Circle 141 on reader service card

Dual 1264 Record Player



and at higher forces they are at 0.25-gram intervals.

The counterweight of the arm contains Dual's mechanical antiresonance filter, an adjustable internal mechanical system whose resonant frequency can be set to match the natural arm/cartridge resonance. This helps minimize the effect of the arm/cartridge resonance on low-frequency response and improves the tracking of warped records. A calibration chart and table in the instruction manual show where to set the antiresonance filter for phono cartridges of different total mass and stylus compliance. The antiskating dial on the motorboard near the arm base has separate scales for spherical and elliptical styli.

The cartridge-mounting assembly of the Dual 1264 is designed to minimize the mass added at that critical part of the arm. There is no plug-in head shell, but instead a small plastic plate is provided on which the cartridge can be mounted. The connecting leads are integral with the arm and must be connected to the cartridge pins before the plate is finally fastened to the end of the arm with its single retaining screw.

The effective mass of the tone arm (less cartridge) is only about 5 grams, making it one of the lightest arms available. Dual has taken an additional step to minimize the total arm/cartridge mass through a cooperative effort with Ortofon. The Danish cartridge manufacturer has designed a special version of their LM (low-mass) cartridge to mount directly in the Dual arm. The LM cartridge weighs only 2.5 grams, less than one-third the weight of most cartridges and their mounting hardware. The Dual 1264, like the company's other current record players, can be bought with or without the Dual ULM cartridge. The ULM55E, rated to track at 1.5 grams, is available for the 1264. It has an integral swingaway stylus

(Continued on page 46)

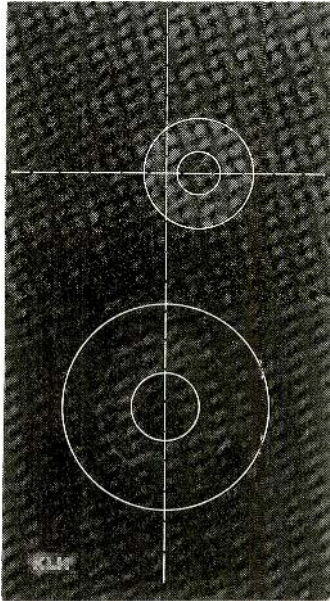
ALTHOUGH single-play turntables with varying degrees of automatic operation have taken over most of the record-player market, there is still some demand for high-quality record changers by music lovers whose preferred fare includes multi-record opera sets, or who simply like to listen to several hours of music without having to change records every half-hour or so.

The Dual 1264 is one of two fully automatic turntables (record changers) in the company's current line. It is belt-driven by a sixteen-pole synchronous motor at either 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ or 45 rpm. The 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ -pound cast-aluminum-alloy platter is driven by a compliant belt whose position on the stepped drive shaft is shifted mechanically by a lever for speed change. Concentric with the speed-selection lever is a knob that expands the effective diameter of the driving portion of the shaft for a vernier speed adjustment of about ± 6 per cent. The edge of the platter has cast stroboscope marks for the two

speeds at line frequencies of 50 or 60 Hz. It is illuminated from below the motorboard through a plastic prism.

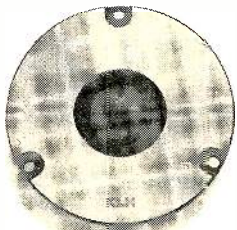
Interchangeable center spindles are provided for single- or multiple-play operation. When the short single-play spindle is replaced by the multiple-play spindle, up to six records of the same size and speed can be loaded and played in sequence, with the record player shutting off after the last one. The tone arm of the 1264 is the "ultra-low mass" (ULM) design used throughout the Dual turntable line. It is a slim, straight tube of lightweight alloy, pivoted on four low-friction gimbal bearings. The cartridge mass is counterbalanced by a weight whose position is locked by a setscrew, and it can be rotated for fine-balance adjustment. The actual tracking force is supplied by a spring, concentric with the vertical pivot axis and adjusted by a small knob with a scale calibrated from 0 to 3 grams. Below 1.5 grams, the calibrations are at 0.1-gram intervals,

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN YOUR FIRST GOOD SPEAKER SYSTEM.



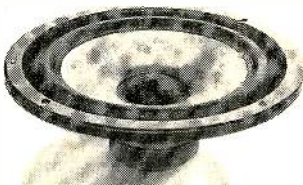
OFFSET TWEETER

Offset tweeters provide smoother response and help to prevent distortions caused by baffle and cabinet effects.



DOM TWEETER

You'll find dome tweeters used almost universally in expensive speakers because they provide better dispersion, better response and smoother sound than conventional cone tweeters.



POLYPROPYLENE WOOFERS

By reducing cone "breakup," polypropylene woofers reproduce the original signal more accurately than either paper or bextrene.

At KLH, we've got a philosophy that stands hard and fast.

A low price is no excuse for a poor speaker.

That's why we pack more technology into our speakers—even our least expensive systems—than any other speaker near the price.

And while it's true that you'll have to trust your ears to make the ultimate decision, a few simple tips can help you understand what makes one \$125 speaker sound better than another.

THE TWEETER

Look for a dome tweeter. Since cone tweeters are much less expensive, they're used almost universally in this price range. But cone tweeters can restrict the optimum listening area to a narrow range. A dome tweeter, such as the one you'll find on the KLH-160, gives wider dispersion, wider response, and smoother, more natural sound.

THE WOOFER

Typically, woofer cones are constructed of conventional materials like paper or bextrene. However, the KLH-160 uses a unique polypropylene formulation that reproduces the signal more faithfully. Polypropylene reduces coloration caused by cone "breakup"—the result of uncontrolled cone motion.

THE CROSSOVER NETWORK

The crossover network, through a series of steps, sorts out the different frequencies and directs them to the appropriate drivers. The KLH-160 uses a 7-element crossover network instead of the 2- or 3-element network used in other comparably priced systems.

THE DESIGN

There are so many approaches to driver array, baffle and cabinet design, entire books have been written on the subject. But there are two basic considerations to be concerned with.

First, baffle and cabinet effects. The KLH-160 uses offset tweeters to minimize irregularities in frequency response caused by the cabinet and baffle.

Second, stereo imaging. If the tweeters are offset, the speakers must be a mirror image pair. Buying 2 "left" speakers will radically affect stereo imaging.

THE PRICE

In this price range, extra money doesn't always buy extra quality. Which is why we urge you to compare the \$125 KLH-160 with any other comparably priced speaker. Compare point for point. You'll find a few of these features in some speakers. But we don't think you'll find them all in a speaker anywhere near the price.

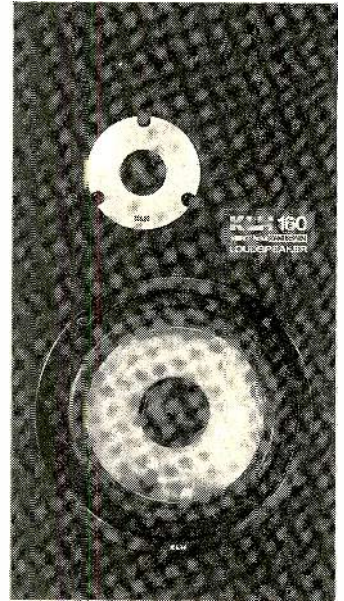
And if you'd like the additional benefit of a three-way system, compare the \$190 KLH-150 with any other comparably priced speaker. Its larger cabinet, more powerful woofer and polypropylene midrange driver give it deeper lows, smoother midranges, and allow it to play louder.

The new KLH speakers. Now that you understand the difference, wouldn't you like to hear the difference?

To find out where you can hear the full line of KLH speakers (including our Computer Controlled Loudspeakers™), call 800-225-6042 (in Mass. 800-532-9566). KLH Research and Development Corporation, 145 University Avenue, Westwood, MA 02090. In Canada: The Pringle Group, Ontario, Canada. © KLH 1980

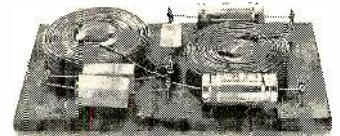


CIRCLE NO. 35 ON READER SERVICE CARD



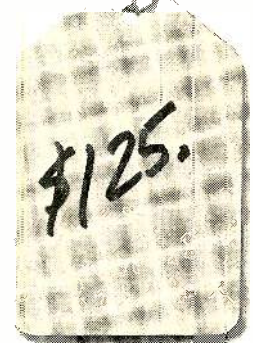
MIRROR IMAGE PAIRS

If the tweeters are offset, make sure the speakers are mirror image pairs. Two "left" speakers will ruin stereo imaging.



THE CROSSOVER NETWORK

This 7-element network provides smoother sound and higher reliability than the simpler 2- or 3-element designs found in most lower priced loudspeakers.



THE PRICE

Speakers should represent at least 40% of the cost of your system. The KLH-160 will fit very nicely in a \$500-\$700 system. The three-way KLH-150 is priced right for a system costing \$700-\$1,000.

guard, and the total effective mass of the ULM arm and cartridge is less than 8 grams.

The operation of the Dual 1264 is basically controlled by a single lever. Moving it to START turns the motor on and indexes the tone arm to a diameter of 12 inches for 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm or 7 inches for 45-rpm operation. Other combinations of size and speed can be played manually, since lifting the arm from its rest turns the motor on. At the end of play the arm returns to its rest and shuts the motor off. The shut-down cycle can be initiated at any time by moving the lever to STOP. Along the right side of the record player is a cueing lever with damped control of arm height in both directions of movement and a small knob that can be set either to repeat a record indefinitely or to play each record only once.

The entire record player is supported on three soft springs from its walnut-grain wooden base. With its clear-plastic hinged dust cover lowered, the Dual 1264 is 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, and 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches high. Price: Dual 1264 without cartridge, \$279.95; with Dual/Ortofon ULM55E cartridge, \$389.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We tested the Dual 1264 with the factory-installed ULM55E cartridge. When the arm had been balanced according to instructions, the stylus-force dial calibrations agreed with our standard gauge within 0.05 gram. The tracking error of the arm was less than 0.5 degree per inch over most of the record surface. When the ULM55E cartridge is installed there is no provision for overhang adjustment, but with another type of cartridge the cartridge slide is slotted for position adjustment, and a plastic gauge is supplied as an aid to installation.

The capacitance of the cable wiring was about 180 picofarads per channel, a figure well suited to most modern cartridges. The

total effective mass of arm and cartridge was 7.8 grams, closely matching Dual's ratings and making this one of the lowest-mass players available. In our tests the adjustable antiresonance filter had limited effect on the amplitude of the low-frequency resonance. (A narrow notch was inserted in the resonance curve when the filter was set according to instructions.) The combination arm/cartridge resonance produced a broad rise of about 5 dB, centered at about 15 Hz but affecting the response as high as 30 Hz or so by perhaps 1 dB. This slight boost of 2 or 2 dB in the 20- to 30-Hz range is hardly likely to be audible and should not be objectionable even if it can be heard. Very few speakers would not benefit from some assistance in that part of the spectrum.

The tone-arm cueing device had the accuracy and freedom from drift that have always been characteristic of Dual record players. The antiskating compensation was more difficult to assess; settings from 1.5 to 3 grams were beneficial at the 1.5-gram tracking force we used, but as with the antiresonance filter we found the adjustment not at all critical.

The turntable had the rather slow start and stop times that are typical of many automatic record players. Some 17 seconds elapsed between moving the lever to START and the beginning of play, and the STOP (or CHANGE) time was 14 to 15 seconds. When the motor shut off, the platter of the Dual 1264 stopped almost instantly.

The unweighted rumble of the turntable was -35 dB, improving to -54 dB with ARLL weighting. Spectrum analysis showed small rumble concentrations at 10, 80, 90, and 120 Hz. The flutter was 0.08 per cent unweighted rms and ± 0.1 per cent weighted peak, with spectral peaks at 10 and 20 Hz and between 100 and 110 Hz. The operating speeds of the turntable did not vary detectably when the a.c. line voltage was shifted between 95 and 135 volts.

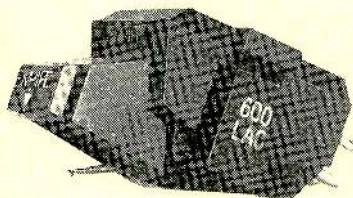
The entire mechanism of the Dual 1264 is floated on very soft springs. Care is needed to avoid bouncing the arm when handling the controls. The soft suspension contributed to the 1264's above-average isolation from base-conducted vibration. We were not surprised to find it better than most direct-drive turntables in this respect, but it was also better isolated than many other belt-driven players. We measured only two transmission responses, at 35 and 80 Hz, and there was virtually no conducted vibration at frequencies above 100 Hz.

● **Comment.** The continuity of appearance and design features that Dual has maintained over the years provides assurance to the buyer that he is getting the same record-player quality—with more up-to-date technology—that has been the mainstay of Dual's success in the marketplace. Probably the most convincing demonstration of the benefits of Dual's ULM arm and cartridge combination is to play a severely warped record—one that on other record players throws the pickup into the air every time the warp comes around. We have a number of such records, carefully put aside for just such a purpose. The Dual 1264—in almost every case—played these records perfectly, with not even an audible hint of the presence of a warp.

It is not necessary to use the ULM cartridge to obtain this benefit, but it does seem to give the ultimate in warp-tracking ability in this arm. It also happens to be a very good cartridge, comparable in every way to others in its price range. If a stack of records is your preferred program source and your present player is due for replacement, this is the one to see and hear. The Dual 1264 with the ULM55E cartridge is almost certainly the best record changer presently available to the audiophile.

Circle 142 on reader service card

Empire 600LAC Phono Cartridge



EMPIRE's new "Dynamic Interface" series of phono cartridges features, at substantially lower prices, many of the design innovations first introduced in their top-of-the-line Model EDR.9. The basic Empire three-magnet, four-coil structure has been retained in the new cartridges, but samarium-cobalt magnets are used to obtain higher output and improved microphonic isolation, together with a reduction of about 20 per cent in total cartridge mass.

The cartridge's electrical system has

been designed to be compatible with the wiring capacitance of most modern record players and amplifier phono inputs, and the cartridge response is not critically dependent on its load. The physical design of the all-black cartridge body provides retaining slots for the mounting nuts (simplifying installation) and locks the removable stylus assembly at two points to prevent a loose fit.

The two top models in the Dynamic Interface series are the 600LAC and the

500ID, both of which have tapered aluminum-alloy stylus cantilevers, boron-vapor treated for hardness, and the inertially damped tuned stylus first introduced in the EDR.9. Instead of using electrical equalization of the stylus resonance (which requires a specific load capacitance and resistance to obtain the rated frequency response) or heavy elastomeric damping of the moving system to suppress the effects of the resonance (which can impair tracking), Empire has added a tiny iron mass suspended on a separate elastomeric bearing within the rear portion of the hollow cantilever. The inertial damping converts the normal single high-frequency-resonance response peak (typically in the 15,000- to 25,000-Hz range) to two broader, lower-amplitude peaks above and below the original resonance frequency. This technique is said to avoid the tracking problems associated with excessive pivot damping, yielding a wider and smoother frequency response than more conventional stylus-damping systems.

The top model of the Empire Dynamic
(Continued on page 49)

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The Advent 5002.

**If you would like
the best in loudspeakers
but doubt you can afford them,
please read this ad.**

The loudspeaker shown—the new Advent 5002—is intended to be compared in audible performance, including frequency bandwidth, with the most elaborate and expensive speakers available. We realize that this statement may be difficult to accept, but it is true and can be verified by listening.

This new speaker from Advent was developed after many years of experience in designing and manufacturing high-performance speaker systems, including some of the most popular models ever sold in the United States. The new Advent 5002 takes full advantage of new design ideas, new materials, and new manufacturing techniques.

Over-engineering (needlessly elaborate designs in imitation of what has existed so far) is a common problem in audio equipment, and one for which the customer often pays heavily. We believe good design is represented by the simplest and most direct approach that realizes a design objective without compromise.

The new Advent 5002 is a two-way system. A single speaker would be a more "ideal" device, but in actual use requires giving up either the frequency range or bandwidth of a no-compromise loudspeaker. Three-way and four-way systems are frequently unnecessarily expensive and elaborate. They are also often inferior-sound-

ing because of interference effects and the abrupt electrical cut-off of drivers in different operating ranges. The two-way design is simple and effective, and the new Advent 5002 system exploits it more thoroughly than have any previous speakers. No more elaborate design offers wider range or more meaningful performance characteristics.

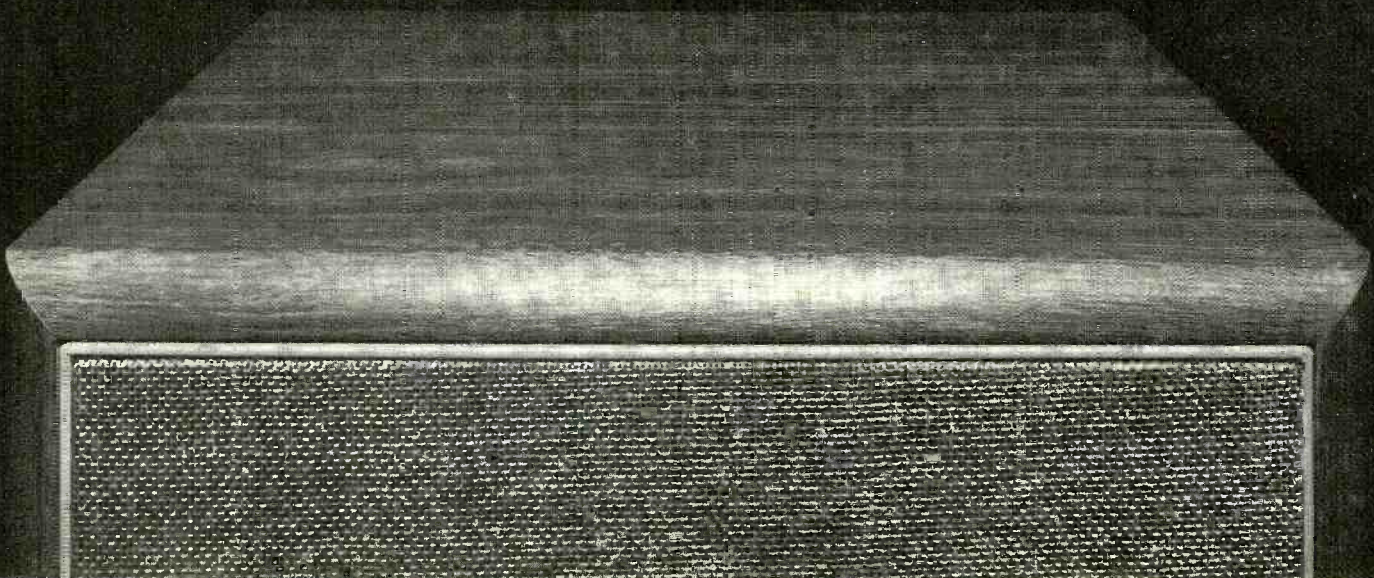
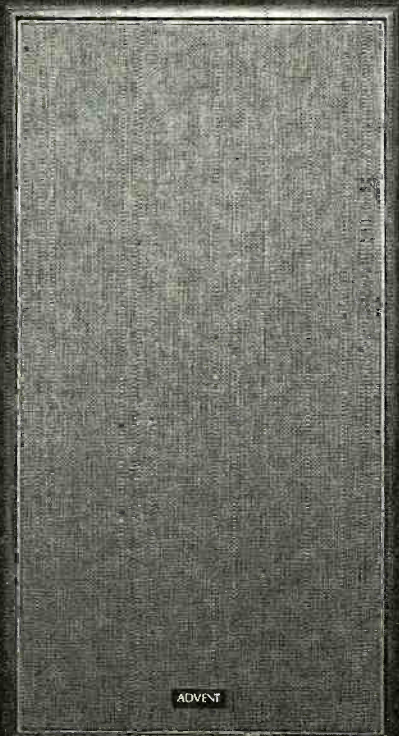
The new Advent 5002 sounds obviously and dramatically better than other speakers in its price range and than many far more expensive speakers.

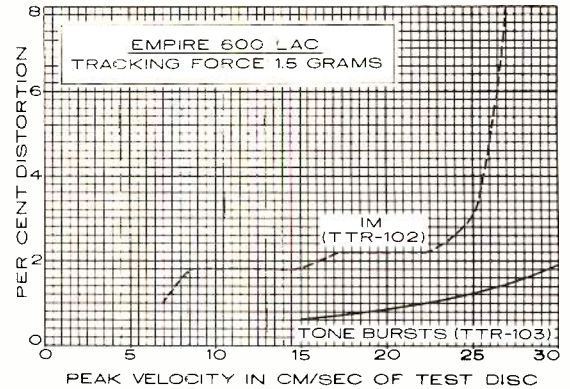
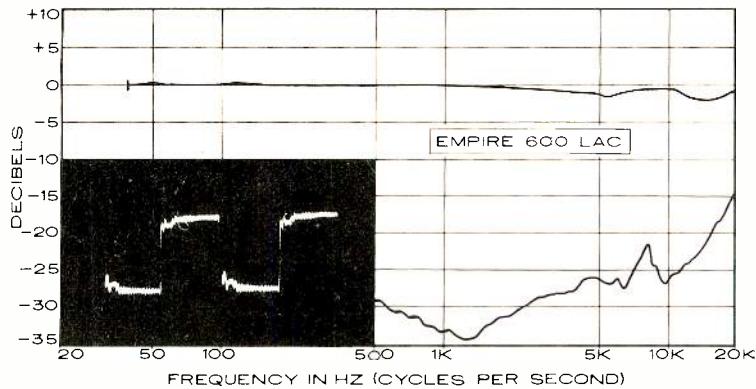
We will be happy to send you more detailed information on Advent's new speaker systems and the name of the nearest Advent dealer. Please write us at the address below. Thank you.

Advent loudspeakers range in price from \$99.95 to \$209.95 (suggested retail).

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CIRCLE NO. 72 ON READER SERVICE CARD





In the graph at left, the upper curve represents the frequency response of the cartridge. The distance (measured in decibels) between it and the lower curve represents the separation between the two channels (anything above 15 dB is adequate). The inset oscilloscope photo shows the cartridge's response to a recorded 1,000-Hz square wave, which indicates resonances and overall frequency response (see text). At right is the cartridge's response to the intermodulation-distortion (IM) and 10.8-kHz tone-burst test bands of the TTR-102 and TTR-103 test records. These high veloc-

ities provide a severe test of a phono cartridge's performance. The intermodulation-distortion (IM) readings for any given cartridge can vary widely, depending on the particular IM test record used. The actual distortion figure measured is not as important as the maximum recorded-signal groove velocity at which the cartridge is able to track before a sudden and radical increase in distortion takes place. There are very few commercial phonograph discs that embody musical audio signals whose average recorded groove velocities are much higher than about 15 centimeters per second.

Interface series is the 600LAC. It features a "large area of contact" (LAC) diamond stylus that extends its frequency response well beyond audible limits and causes less record wear than conventional elliptical or spherical styli operating at lower tracking forces. The electrical and mechanical specifications of the Empire Dynamic Interface cartridges are presented in great detail by the manufacturer, in sharp contrast to the sketchy nature of most of the cartridge ratings we have seen. The price of the 600 LAC is \$175.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Empire 600LAC, which weighs 5.3 grams, was installed in a tone arm having an effective mass of 11 grams. The low-frequency resonance of the combination was at about 10 Hz, with an amplitude of 5 to 6 dB. The total cartridge load for our tests was 47,000 ohms in parallel with 170 picofarads (pF). The nominal-load capacitance rating of the cartridge is 150 pF, but Empire states that variations of ± 100 pF will not have audible

effects. We checked the frequency response with loads of 170 and 400 pF, and the higher capacitance increased the output in the 5,000- to 20,000-Hz range by a maximum of about 1 dB.

With the CBS STR 100 test record, the frequency response from 40 to 20,000 Hz varied only ± 1 dB in one channel and ± 2 dB in the other. An extended response measurement with the JVC TRS-1005 test record showed a total output variation of 5 dB up to 35,000 Hz in one channel and up to 50,000 Hz in the other. Channel separation was maintained all the way up to the record's 50,000-Hz limit.

The channel separation measured with the STR 100 test record was exceptionally symmetrical between channels. It exceeded 30 dB in the midrange and was 15 to 18 dB at 15,000 Hz. The 1,000-Hz square waves of the CBS STR 112 test record were reproduced very well, with a barely detectable ringing at the stylus resonance of about 20,000 Hz and a very-low-level sustained ringing at about 40,000 Hz (the latter is

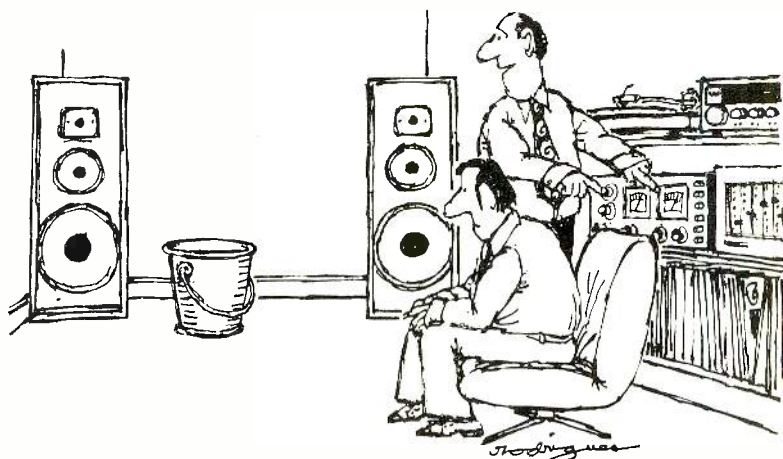
built into the record and can be detected only in the output signal of a phono cartridge whose response extends beyond that frequency).

The Empire 600LAC is designed to track at forces between 1 and 2 grams, with a recommended value of 1.5 grams. At 1.5 grams it did a fine job of tracking our high-level low- and mid-frequency test records and the 70-micrometer level of the German Hi Fi Institute test record. The output at a velocity of 3.54 cm/sec was about 3.8 millivolts, with the channel levels matched within 0.35 dB. The measured vertical stylus angle was 20 degrees, as rated.

The tracking distortions were measured with Shure TTR-102 and TTR-103 test records at a 1.5-gram force. The intermodulation distortion using the TTR-102 was about 2 per cent or less up to about 23 cm/sec and rose to 9 per cent at the record's maximum level of 27 cm/sec. The high-frequency tracking distortion of the 10.8-kHz tone bursts on the TTR-103 record was typical of what we have measured with other high-quality cartridges. It increased smoothly from about 0.6 per cent at 15 cm/sec to 1.9 per cent at 30 cm/sec.

● **Comment.** Subjective tracking tests using Shure's "Audio Obstacle Course" records were consistent with our measurements. At 1.5 grams, all of the ERA III record except the highest level of the sibilance section could be tracked without audible distortion. Increasing the force to 2 grams enabled the cartridge to track even that very difficult selection. On the ERA IV record, only a strained sound at the highest level of the flute and combined flute/harp sections kept the 600LAC from achieving a perfect score.

The Empire 600LAC sounds as smooth as its response curve looks. As a matter of fact, its curve would have been considered quite acceptable for an amplifier not too many years ago. It should be able to track any commercially recorded program without strain or distortion at its nominal 1.5-



"... Now watch this—I'm going to put two of the three bassoonists inside that pail. ..."

gram force (which, because of the increased contact area of the LAC stylus, should cause less record wear than an elliptical stylus at the same force).

In our view, as important as the excellent intrinsic sound quality of the Empire

600LAC is the fact that it is nearly independent of external load conditions. (Loading effects can cause more change in the sound of a given cartridge than is likely to come with a change to a completely different cartridge!) In other words, the 600LAC

will produce the same excellent sound regardless of the circuit capacitances of the record player and amplifier, thus eliminating one uncontrolled variable in a system.

Circle 143 on reader service card



**Luxman R-3045
AM/FM Stereo Receiver**

THE Luxman R-3045 stereo receiver features the "Duo-Beta" amplifier circuit developed by Lux and recently introduced in some of their higher-price separate amplifiers. "Duo-Beta" refers to a dual feedback system having, in addition to the usual overall negative feedback path, a second amplified feedback circuit that operates only at infrasonic frequencies between 5 Hz and d.c. ("zero frequency"). A modest power rating (45 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.05 per cent total harmonic distortion) makes it possible for the Luxman R-3045 to be sold at a moderate price compared with that of most previous Luxman products. In other respects, such as appearance, operating flexibility, and general electronic performance quality, the R-3045 shows its strong family resemblance to the other Luxman equipment.

Instead of meters, the R-3045 makes effective use of multiple LED displays. The audio-output level is shown separately for the two channels by twin rows of LEDs below the dial scales. Each channel has five LEDs calibrated to glow at outputs of 0.1, 0.3, 1, 3, and 45 watts into 8-ohm loads. This unusual arrangement gives a visible display under most listening conditions while retaining the important quality of showing when the amplifier's rated maximum power is reached.

A unique tuning indicator to the left of the dial scales uses five LEDs, also in a horizontal row. On the FM band, when the tuning approaches a broadcast signal, the lights begin to flash sequentially to show in which direction the dial pointer should be moved to reach the signal frequency. At the correct tuning point, the flashing display changes to a row of stationary lights whose number (from 1 to 5) is proportional to signal strength. For AM reception only the

signal-strength indication functions. Next to the tuning lights is a STEREO light for FM reception.

The other controls form a single row across the bottom of the panel. A function knob selects the program source from among AM, FM, PHONO (MM), PHONO (MC), and AUX. Although there is only a single set of phono inputs, the R-3045 has a separate moving-coil-cartridge head amplifier that is switched in when the PHONO (MC) input is selected (the input resistance is simultaneously reduced to a value compatible with moving-coil requirements). The TAPE DUBBING switch, which supplies the selected program to both sets of tape-recording outputs in its center (SOURCE) position, can cross-connect two tape decks for dubbing from either machine to the other. The remaining knobs are the BASS and TREBLE controls and the VOLUME control, which is a

dual concentric type with slip-clutch coupling for adjusting the channel balance.

The other controls are pushbuttons. One group switches off the FM muting, selects mono operation, connects the tape-recorder monitor signals to the amplifier instead of the regular source, and selects which of the two tape decks is being monitored. Other buttons activate the SUBSONIC and HIGH CUT filters, the loudness-compensation circuit, and the two sets of speaker outputs. A pushbutton power switch and a headphone jack complete the front-panel features.

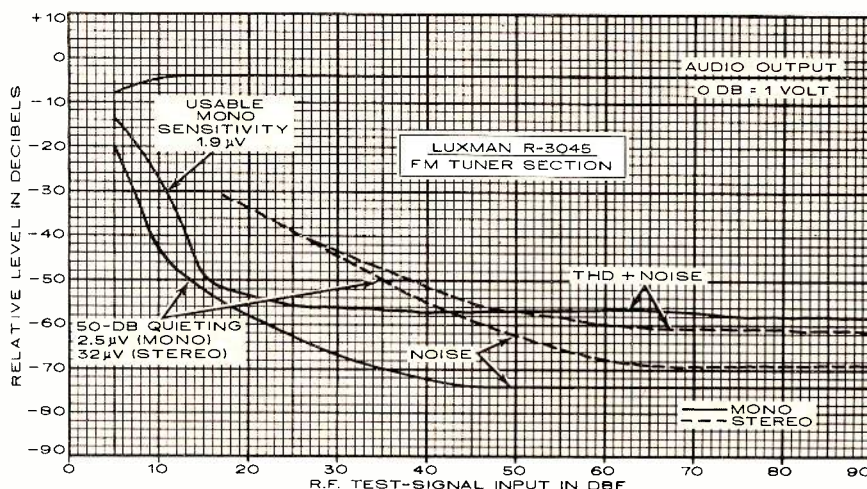
On the rear apron are binding-post connectors for two sets of speakers and the antennas, plus a hinged ferrite-rod antenna for AM. The only signal jacks are the two sets of tape-recording outputs and inputs and the AUX and phono inputs. There is a single unswitched a.c. outlet.

The Luxman R-3045 is furnished in a handsome rosewood-veneer wooden cabinet. It is approximately 19¾ inches wide, 12¾ inches deep, and 6½ inches high, and it weighs 23 pounds. Price: \$495.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Luxman R-3045 employs a closed "heat loop" cooling system in which the heat from the output transistors vaporizes Freon refrigerant in a sealed system that gives off its heat to the air through a group of fins as the Freon condenses. The fins are located under a grille on top of the cabinet, which remains quite cool in normal use but became rather hot during the 1-hour FTC-mandated pre-conditioning period.

The 1,000-Hz clipping power output, both channels driven, was 54 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads, 50.4 watts into 4 ohms, and 14.5 watts into 2 ohms. Dynamic-power measurements with a 20-mil-

(Continued on page 52)



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Through the magic of LSI technology, pulsed power supplies and a unique mini circuit board design, AKAI has masterfully managed to craft a collection of audio components that rivals many systems twice its size. The new UC-5 series.

For starters, you'll find gold-plated pin jacks and input terminals standard throughout to minimize distortion and maximize durability.

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On to the quartz synthesized AM/FM tuner, with five-LED signal strength indicators, digital frequency display, six-station preset capability, and both auto and manual tuning.

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All in all, a pretty substantial package of components that measures a fashionably lean 10 7/8" wide. Incredible.

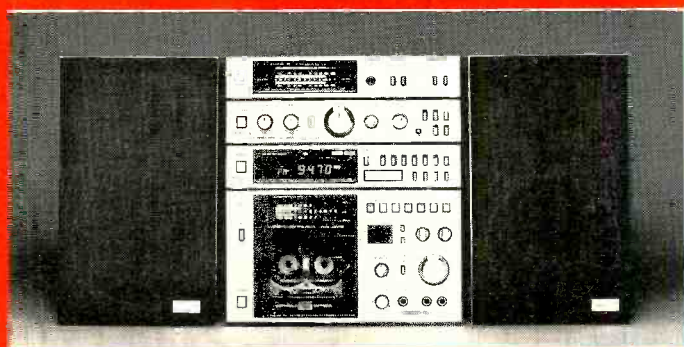
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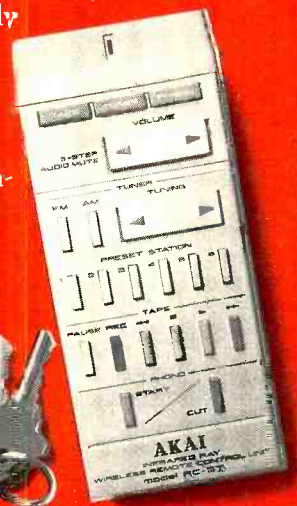
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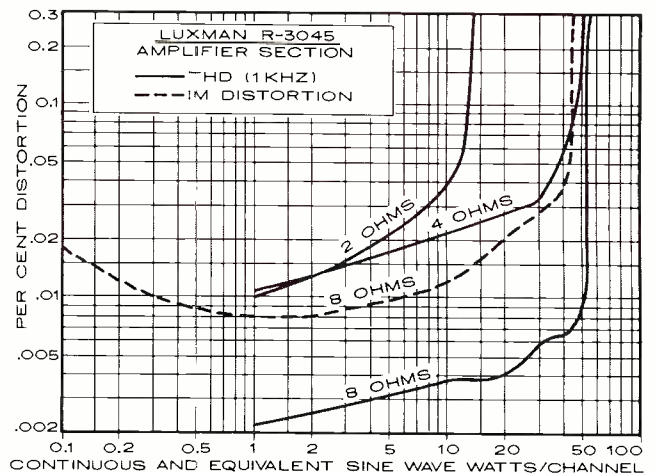
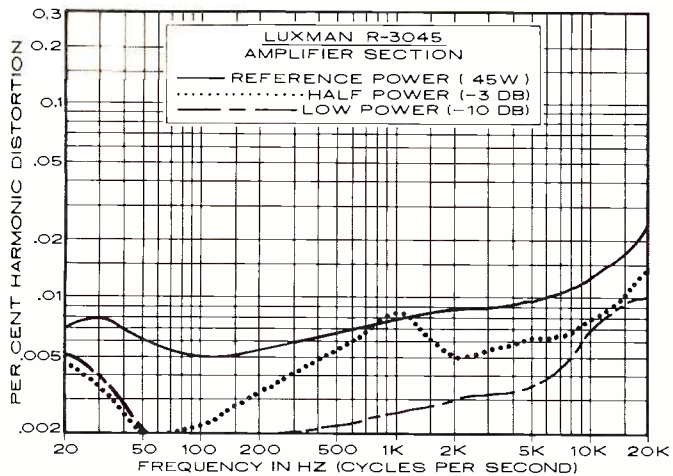


The UC-5 series. Both pre-amp and amp, digital tuner, metal cassette and 2-way bookshelf speakers.



A K A I

YOU NEVER HEARD IT SO GOOD



lisecond 1,000-Hz tone burst yielded power outputs at clipping of 66.3, 53, and 14.3 watts, respectively (the last figure, measured from an oscilloscope screen, is less accurate than the continuous-power reading, and we can assume that both 2-ohm readings were actually 14.5 watts). The IHF clipping-headroom rating was 0.8 dB, and the dynamic headroom was 1.69 dB, both based on 8-ohm loads (the amplifier is not rated for other impedances). The LED power-output calibration was relatively accurate, typically within 10 per cent of the actual output when a light reached its full brightness.

When we drove both channels with a continuous 1,000-Hz signal, the distortion was under 0.002 per cent at 0.1 watt, increasing smoothly to 0.0022 per cent at 1 watt, 0.004 per cent at 20 watts, and 0.0075 per cent at the rated 45-watt output. With a 4-ohm load, the distortion was 0.011 per cent at 1 watt, 0.022 per cent at 10 watts, and about 0.1 per cent at 45 watts. The amplifier was obviously not "comfortable" driving 2-ohm loads, for which the distortion was 0.01 per cent at 1 watt, 0.04 per cent at 10 watts, and increased substantially at about 14 watts. An intermodulation-distortion measurement with 8-ohm loads gave readings of 0.008 per cent at 1 watt, 0.012 per cent at 10 watts, and 0.07 per cent at 45 watts.

The R-3045 maintained its very low distortion at all audible frequencies. At the rated 45 watts output into 8 ohms, the distortion was between 0.005 and 0.01 per cent from 20 to 5,000 Hz, rising to 0.025 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At reduced power outputs the distortion was always less than at full power.

We measured the IHF IM distortion at 8 ohms using two equal-amplitude tones at 19,000 and 20,000 Hz whose combined peak value was equivalent to that of a 45-watt sine-wave output. The third-order (18,000-Hz) and second-order (1,000-Hz) distortion components were each down about 90 dB from rated power (0.003 per cent). The amplifier rise time was 3.5 microseconds, and its slew rate was 13.4 volts per microsecond measured through the AUX input. The IHF slew factor was greater than our measurement limit of 25.

For a reference power output of 1 watt the R-3045 required an AUX input of 25.5 millivolts (mV) or a phono input of 0.27 and 0.043 mV for the MM and MC modes, respectively. The corresponding signal-to-noise ratios (A-weighted) were 77, 75.6, and 67.7 dB referred to 1 watt. The phono input overloaded at 235 mV at 1,000 Hz, 226 mV at 20 Hz, and 126 mV at 20,000 Hz (the latter two figures are converted to equivalent 1,000-Hz values). The PHONO

(MM) input impedance was 42,000 ohms in parallel with 75 picofarads. No PHONO (MC) measurements were made.

The tone-control characteristics were conventional, although we noted that a minimum setting of both tone controls dropped the overall midrange level by about 3 dB. However, normal settings had little effect on midrange gain. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies, the former to a considerable degree. With low-efficiency speakers, which require a fairly high volume-control setting, this caused no problems, but with the loudness compensation switched in and the volume control set in the lower half of its range the sound tended to be rather heavy. The high and infrasonic filters had gradual 6-dB-per-octave slopes, with their -3-dB response points at 6,700 and 45 Hz. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate within ± 0.5 dB from 35 to 20,000 Hz, down 3 dB at 20 Hz (measured at the tape outputs). It was totally unaffected by the phono-cartridge inductance.

The FM-tuner section had an IHF usable sensitivity of 10.8 dBf (1.9 microvolts, or μV) in mono, and its sensitivity in stereo was set by the switching threshold at about 17 dBf (4 μV). Quieting of 50 dB was achieved with a mono input of 13.5 dBf (2.5 μV) and at 35.3 dBf (32 μV) in stereo. The ultimate distortion at 65 dBf (1,000 μV) was 0.14 per cent in mono and 0.095 per cent in stereo, and the corresponding noise levels were -74.5 and -69 dB. The signal-strength LEDs came on at inputs between 17.3 dBf (4 μV) and 57 dBf (400 μV).

The stereo performance of the R-3045's FM section was very good, with a frequency response of ± 1.5 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz and channel separation typically 40 to 45 dB from 45 to 15,000 Hz and 37 dB at 30 Hz. In an IHF IM measurement using 14,000- and 15,000-Hz tones whose combined peak level was equivalent to a 100 per cent modulating sine-wave signal, the third-order distortion products at 13,000 and 16,000 Hz were each at -55 dB (0.18 per cent) and the second-order distortion product at 1,000 Hz was 0.71 per cent.

The other performance characteristics of the FM section were also quite good. The
(Continued on page 54)



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CIRCLE NO. 41 ON READER SERVICE CARD

capture ratio was 1.1 dB at a 65-dBf input and the AM rejection was 63 dB. Alternate-channel and adjacent-channel selectivity figures were, respectively, 70 and 5 dB. The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage was at a -66-dB level, and the tuner hum was -69 dB. The muting threshold was between 16 and 18.3 dBf (3.5 to 4.5 μ V). The AM-tuner frequency response was down 6 dB at 100 and 4,000 Hz.

● **Comment.** Having seen (we thought) almost every possible configuration of lights or meters used for FM tuning aids, we were not prepared for the very neat and effective system employed in the Luxman R-3045. The sequentially flashing lights (like the turn signals used on some cars a few years ago) guide the user clearly toward the correct frequency. When the channel center is reached the lights snap abruptly to a stationary display. Between stations, or when tuning on or off a signal, the receiver is very positively but smoothly muted.

The positive manner in which the light display shifted from its moving to its stationary modes suggested that some sort of AFC or similar frequency-locking circuit was at work. Lacking a schematic diagram, we could not verify that guess. In any case, the stationary light pattern is present only when one is *exactly* tuned to an FM signal, making it one of the more accurate tuning arrangements we have used. In spite of its sharp and unambiguous action, the tuning was very easy and unfussy.

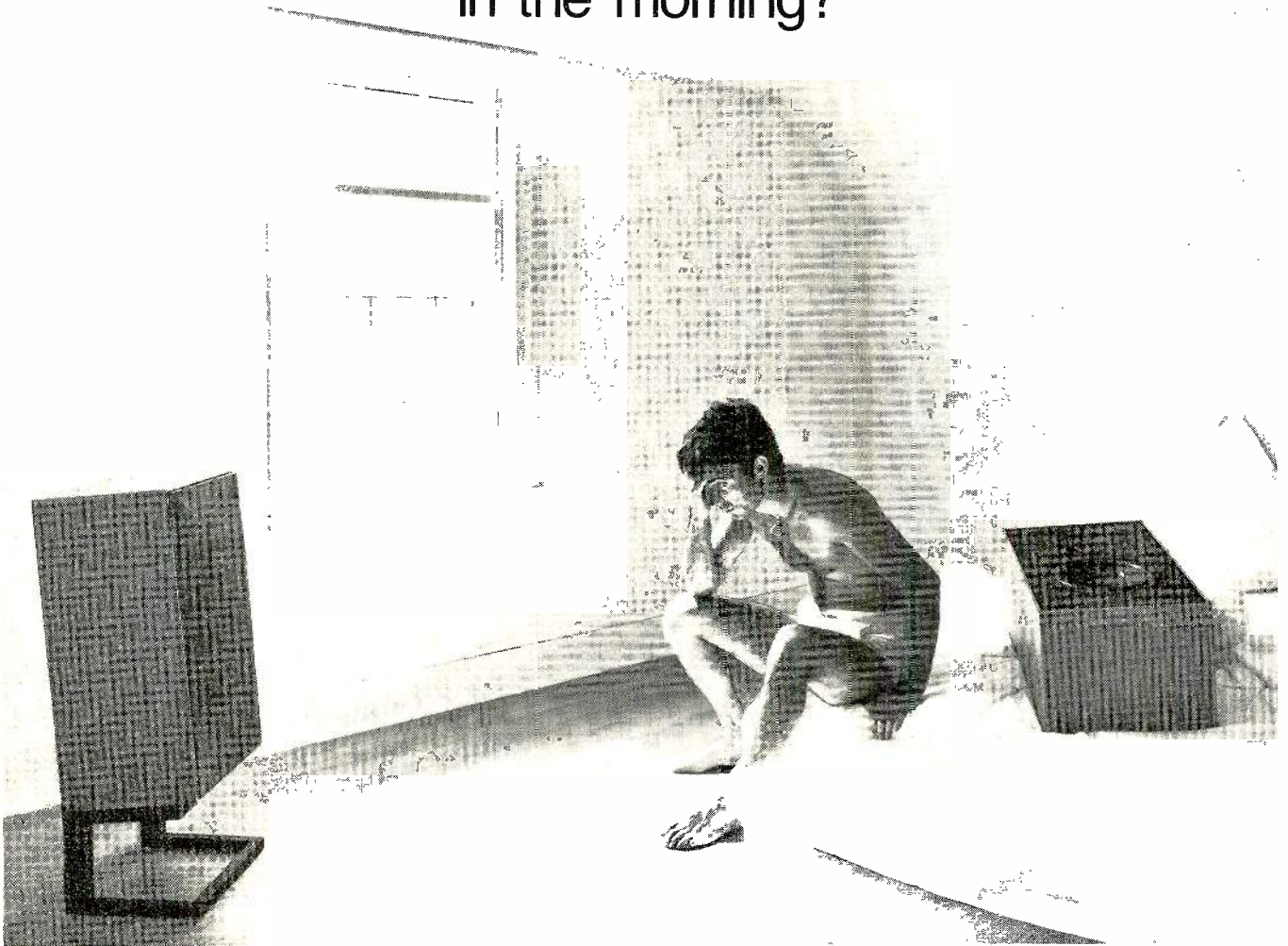
Not so unambiguous was the FM dial scale. With numbers spaced at megahertz intervals and reference lines only every other megahertz, some guesswork was required to identify the tuned frequency. We also used the R-3045 with a low-output moving-coil cartridge to judge the MC head amplifier. The gain was adequate, but at volume-control settings beyond the halfway point (reasonable for high volume levels) there was an audible hum during quiet passages or when the pickup was lifted from the record. We determined that this hum was in the receiver, even with its phono inputs shorted, and it resulted in somewhat higher noise levels in the MC mode compared to the other sources.

The general handling of the Luxman R-3045 was excellent, with the smoothness we have long associated with Luxman products. Similarly, its sound quality was beyond reproach within the limits of its power ratings. The power amplifiers of the R-3045 obviously do not have much current reserve, and it would be unwise to attempt to drive speakers whose impedance drops below 4 ohms at any frequency. If two pairs of speakers are used, both should be genuine 8-ohm models (some speakers rated "8 ohms" fall far below that value at some frequencies). This point is stressed in the receiver's installation instructions.

The Luxman R-3045 brings the elegance and quality of the Luxman brand name to a relatively low price range. It has a very competent FM-tuner section and an excellent but relatively low-powered audio section. For the user who does not feel a need for high power or for features not found in the R-3045, it should be a very satisfactory receiver.

Circle 144 on reader service card

Will you still respect your speakers in the morning?



Sure, they sounded great last night.

But the **real** test of a speaker system is the morning after.

Will your speakers sweeten your morning coffee with Vivaldi, or will they make you wish you'd never turned your stereo on?

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Some speakers are impressive when played loudly. But a truly great speaker is equally, if not more, impressive at low listening levels. "Loud" is desirable at times, but a speaker to be lived with must do much more.

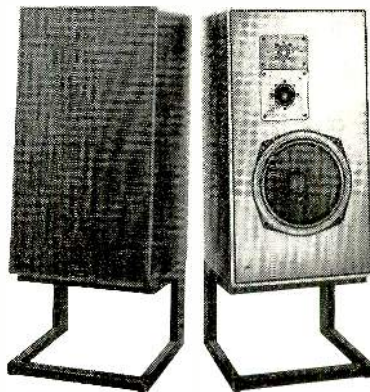
For years, and without fanfare, ADS has been building monitor speaker systems for some of the most demanding sound engineers in the music industry. ADS technology is uniquely able to accommodate their diverse and challenging re-

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The new ADS L730, for example, is a direct outgrowth of ADS' continuing involvement in digital recording technology. An unusual combination of extended fre-

quency range, uncanny sonic accuracy, razor-sharp stereo imaging and true-to-life dynamic range, the L730 delivers untiring musical performance. Although the system is capable of shaking walls with clean, undistorted sound, you'll appreciate it most on those mornings when quality counts more than quantity.

The L730 is only one of many ADS speakers, all meticulously engineered and superbly crafted. Your ADS dealer will be happy to help you select the model which best suits your purposes. For more information and the name of the ADS dealer nearest you, please write ADS, Dept. SR-18, or call 1-800-824-7888 (California 1-800-852-7777) toll free and ask for Operator 483.



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original *n*: that from which a copy, reproduction or translation is made. (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary)



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Going on Record

By James
Goodfriend



MISUNDERSTANDING TECHNOLOGY

FROM the beginning, the record industry has always leaned heavily on technology as a sales point. Not only has the incorporation of some new technological development been hailed in advertising and promotion as providing a superior listening experience, but the development itself has been taken as reason to declare the existing catalog of recorded music obsolete and to rerecord (or at least rerelease) the entire repertoire in the new format. And yet the record industry, especially the classical end of it, has consistently misunderstood new technology, whatever it is. It may not be alone in this. The misuse of technological developments is at the root of the ever-increasing difficulty of civilized living in our century. Somehow, after the invention has been invented, after the development has been developed, there is no one around whose job it is to ask, "What is the inherent nature of this development? What are we supposed to do with it?" Or, as one unfamiliar with the device might well ask himself before washing his feet in the toilet bowl, "What is this thing *really* good for?"

The LP record and the seven-inch 45-rpm disc were developed simultaneously. A special advantage of the former was its extended uninterrupted playing time. Advantages of the latter included an extended frequency response, ease of handling, and convenience of storage. Nevertheless, among the initial classical releases on seven-inch 45s were transfers from 78-rpm discs of complete symphonies and concertos. These required multirecord sets that offered no greater continuity than the original 78s and no wider a frequency range.

The early days of stereo provided such monstrosities as ping-pong Beethoven symphonies and the twelve-foot piano keyboard. Later, of course, there were some producers who came to understand the nature of the medium and its correct application. Quadraphonic recording was not so lucky. Consider the nature of quadraphonics: four sound sources, arranged around the listener, which can be either distinct or blended into one another. The basic advantages are three: the ability to present music that employs spatially separated performing ensembles; the ability to clarify complex con-

trapuntal music, particularly that written for a highly resonant acoustic (such as a cathedral); and a slight increase in realism, through the capture of ambient room sound, in the presentation of standard concert, chamber, and solo music. Given these advantages, how many quadraphonic recordings do you think there were of the Gabrieli *canzoni* for multiple brass ensembles, of the Mozart *Notturmo* for Four Orchestras, of the Thomas Tallis "Forty-Voice Motet," of any Palestrina Mass, of any antiphonal piece by Henry Brant, of any Baroque "echo" piece? The answer is that there was one Angel record that had some Gabrieli on it. Instead of the rest we got the music that quadraphony would benefit least, and much of that in one aural distortion or another.

To bring the question up to date, the particular advantages of *digital* recording are crystal clear. You get (from the master tape, at least) no wow, no flutter, and no tape hiss, making possible a greatly enlarged dynamic range. This allows you not to record loud music better (you can always record loud music), but to record soft music with unprecedented clarity without losing it in noise, without compressing it, and without cutting the impact of the occasional loud passage. One might expect, then, a raft of recordings of music with extended quiet sections (Deliuss, Debussy, the Mahler Tenth, the Vaughan Williams Sixth, etc.). But CBS, for example, has chosen instead to give us four or five of the consistently loudest pieces in the repertoire.

As we face the oncoming videodisc we have to wonder if there will be anyone around to ask himself what this thing is really good for. Certainly the television people have never been too good at asking themselves such questions. Will we be treated to innumerable shots of the back of some conductor's head and general score-following Mickey-Mousing? Or do you think someone will have brains enough to ask a video genius like Alan Miller (who produced *The Bolero* and *Romeo and Juliet in Kansas City* for TV), "Please, sir, what *should* we do with a videodisc?" Past history does not make me optimistic about the matter. □



Single-play vs. multiplay: the argument is over.

BSR is proud to put an end to the seemingly endless debate over what style of turntable is the "correct" turntable — single-play or multiplay.

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The BSR Pro III Series combines the precision and accuracy of the finest single-play and the ease and versatility of a multiplay. At a price well within the range of both.

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BSR Pro III Series turntables utilize a floating suspension system to isolate both the turntable and the tonearm. Mounted together on a separate subplate, independent of base, cover and controls, this eliminates most causes of vibration and acoustic feedback.

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Unlike traditional six-record multiplays, the BSR

Pro III Series turntables are designed to play up to three records. The decreased height and weight of the record stack allows for a much more precise vertical tracking angle and overall turntable performance.

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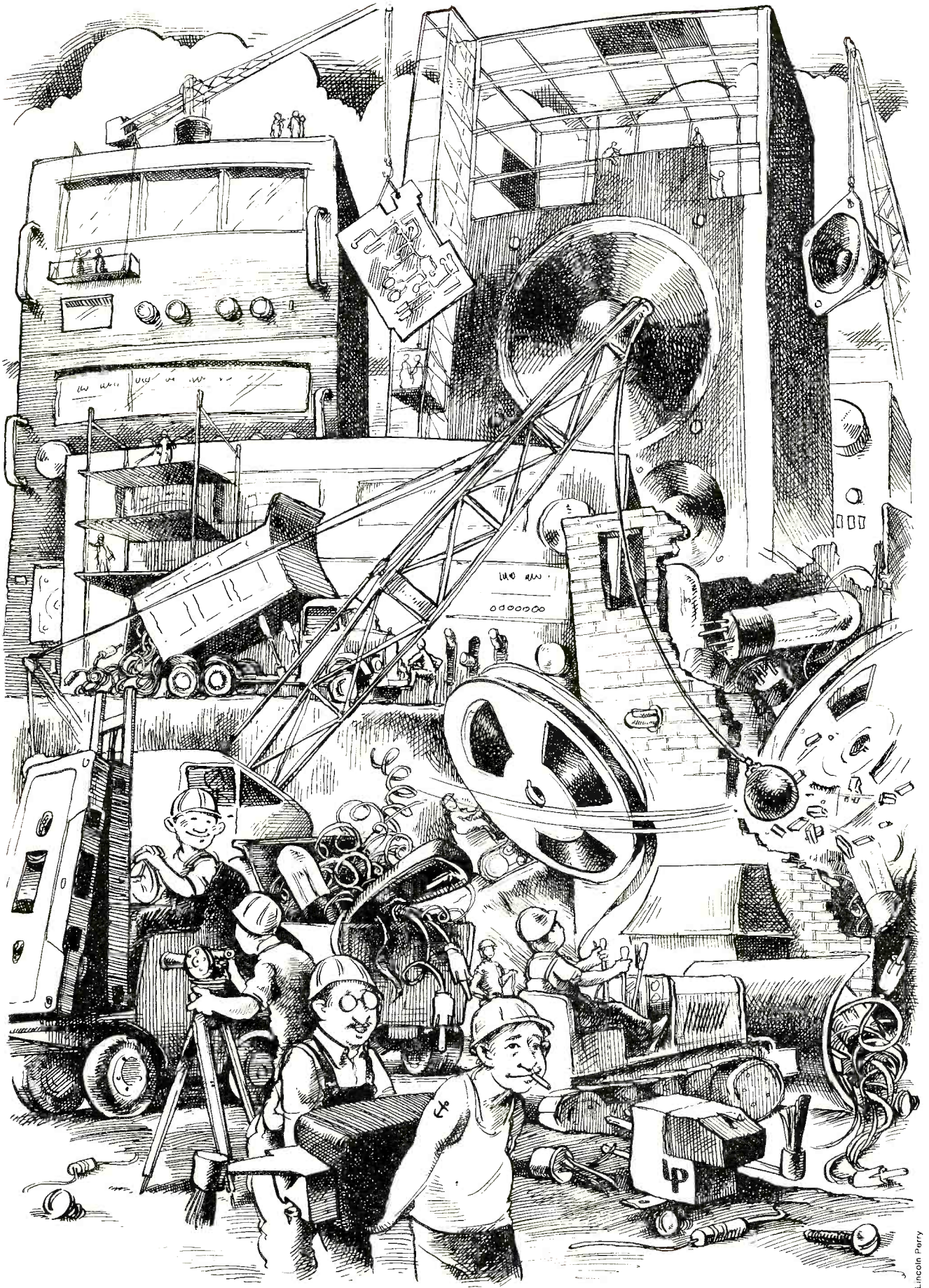
Add it up—both sides win.

Whether you're a believer in single-play or multiplay turntables, we believe that the BSR Pro III Series offers exactly what you demand. We invite you to examine it at your audio dealer.

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CIRCLE NO. 2 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Lincoln Perry

THERE comes a time in the life of every hi-fi equipment owner when his audio setup no longer provides satisfaction. I'm not referring, of course, to those "advanced" audiophiles for whom satisfaction is a rare and fleeting thing at best, lasting in some cases no longer than the interval between issues of their favorite audio-oracle publication. Most audiophiles pursue the holy grail at a more rational and leisurely pace, feeling no compulsion to own the latest highly touted marvel but wanting to upgrade in performance, convenience, or appearance when products embodying really significant developments in any or all of those areas appear on their dealers' shelves. Many a music lover, in truth, simply wants good sound from his equipment and is not likely to go shopping until some fault (real or imaginary) manifests itself in his almost antique but previously satisfactory setup.

Despite the fact that "satisfaction" is a highly subjective state, its loss and its restoration (with respect to one's high-fidelity system, at least) *can* be investigated objectively and rationally. Since the criteria for upgrading necessarily differ from component to component, we will be discussing each category separately in the survey that follows, giving a summary of recent design trends in each subject area. The beginner searching for a first system will therefore also undoubtedly find much advice of value. But it is well to remember that an audio setup, like any other complex, interrelated system, is subject to a variant of the "weak link" principle: the replacement of the weakest component may well spotlight the shortcomings of the next weakest unit, thus unleashing an uncontrolled chain reaction of upgrading and improvement. Consider yourself warned!

—Larry Klein

UPGRADING FOR THE EIGHTIES

By David Ranada

WHEN STEREO REVIEW ran its last general guide to upgrading (in June 1974), quadraphonics was just reaching its not-very-high peak of acceptance, cassette decks had only recently established themselves as a high-fidelity medium, and there was a lot of old *tube* equipment still around. Components of all types have improved tremendously since then, though many of the improvements are in features and specifications, not necessarily in sound.

There are many reasons to upgrade a stereo system. Perhaps the best is to replace a piece of equipment which is giving regular sonic evidence that it has one foot in that great electronic graveyard in the sky. Repairing an old tube or early transistor unit can cost almost as much in time and money as the purchase of a new component with equivalent or better performance. And equipment of recent manufacture, particularly amplifiers, receivers, and tuners, can be expected to work well into the next several decades.

Securing an improvement in audible performance is perhaps the most sensible reason to spend money on your

ASIDE from "replacement due to failure," there are at least four other reasons to upgrade a system: (1) to improve its audible performance, (2) to increase its versatility or convenience, (3) to add new features or functions, and (4) to enhance the "joy of ownership" by adding to a system's prestige. Since the last reason is inherently highly subjective, it will not be discussed here except to say that there is a lot of very expensive Rolls-Royce-grade equipment out there that in my view does not necessarily provide audibly superior performance to go with its aesthetically superior appearance.

stereo system. Contemporary equipment, particularly the non-transducing parts of the chain, superbly meets the traditional criteria of audio excellence: low distortion, flat frequency response, low noise, etc. Though there may be subtle and elusive differences between any two given pieces of electronic equipment, they are certainly not *musically* significant, so let us turn our attentions at once to practical matters.

Low-cost Upgrading

To my mind, the best kind of upgrading for a stereo system is one that costs next to nothing but stands a good chance of improving either sound or reliability—or both. The most important of these is also the cheapest: routine preventive maintenance. For example, the parts of each component which can wear out should be periodically examined and replaced if necessary. This applies to the rubber belts and idler wheels in turntables and tape decks as well as to the more obvious phonograph

UPGRADING...

"... we need high power to supply the demands made by wide-dynamic-range digitally mastered, dbx-encoded, and direct-to-disc recordings."

stylus and tape-recorder heads. A system should also be kept clean: tape heads should be cleaned and demagnetized, styli should be cleaned, and turntable mats and phonograph discs should be kept scrupulously dust-free. And those moving parts which must be lubricated should be.

Every few months, unplug and reconnect all the leads in your entire system—from phono-cartridge pins all the way to loudspeaker terminals—in order to remove any oxide deposits which may have built up between plug and jack. (When reinserting phono plugs, always use a slight twisting motion, which automatically cleans the contacts.) Make sure that the cartridge-pin connections and screw connections are also tight. Check your cartridge's alignment with an alignment gauge. Check the stylus-tracking force with a reliable accessory gauge. It should always be set at the high end of the manufacturer's recommended range. Have your tape recorder aligned by a competent technician, one who will align the heads physically and who will also adjust the electronics to match the tape you prefer. If you have an older tuner or receiver (ten years or so), take it in for alignment. A misaligned tuner suffers in all areas of performance. In every case, the factory itself or a factory-recommended shop is the most reliable.

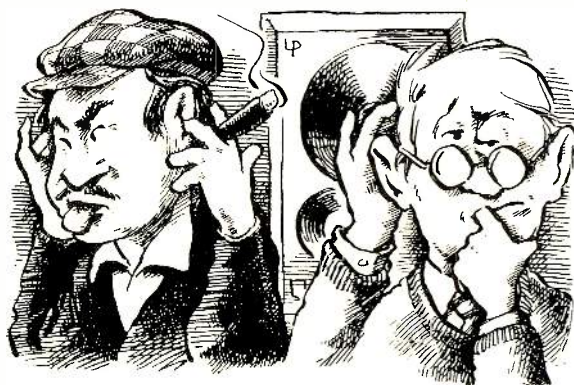
If you haven't bought a new record recently, or if you listen only to older recordings made and pressed before 1975, go out and buy a well-reviewed, high-technology, direct-to-disc or digitally mastered recording. Recording, disc-cutting, and pressing technologies have advanced considerably since the early Seventies, and the new discs demonstrate that a fairly good system always sounds better when playing high-quality program material. On the other hand, some of the best recordings will plainly point out whatever the faults and limitations are in your stereo system. These can include phono-cartridge mistracking, insufficient amplifier power reserve, limited frequency response, and acoustic-feedback problems. Some of these problems can be solved by adjusting old components,

others only by obtaining new equipment or accessories.

In many cases, the best no-cost upgrading you can treat your system to is moving the speakers and/or changing listening rooms. The sound of typical bookshelf loudspeakers is *greatly* influenced by where they are placed. Placement affects not only perceived frequency response but the stereo image as well. Detailed advice on speaker placement was given in STEREO REVIEW's August 1980 issue, so only a few pointers will be given here. If your typical bookshelf speakers are on the floor, lift them up and place them so that their woofers are at least two feet off the floor for flatter bass response. (Note that most commercial speaker stands are lower than this.) Moving speakers away from the wall behind them tends to give an increased sense of depth to the stereo image, while arranging the speakers symmetrically in relation to the side walls tends to equalize the side-wall lateral reflections. (These suggestions assume that the speaker manufacturer does not recommend a specific placement.)

All of these measures can affect your system's sound to varying degrees. Some—like moving the loudspeakers, changing the listening room, cleaning the stylus or tape heads, and new records—can easily make your system sound as if it were new. Some steps—such as replacing belts and wheels, realigning a cartridge, and reconnecting cables—may have little, if any, audible effect. However, knowing that you've done everything you reasonably can to let the system do its very best will help you decide what to do when something does go wrong or let you know when replacement is in order. Preventive maintenance may also reduce the cost and time of a repair job.

Should you decide that none of the above measures can noticeably improve your situation, or if you simply want to purchase some audibly superior equipment, what follows may help. Taking the various components in the order of their effect on final sound quality, the next sections will trace recent developments that may represent real, valuable advances in the state of the audio art from which your system can benefit.



Speakers

Replace your speakers only when you become dissatisfied with their performance—which can happen whenever you walk into a hi-fi showroom and as often as a golden-eared "friend" gives you his opinion on the sound of your system. Speakers rarely "go bad," by the way—assuming, of course, that you haven't tried to overdrive them with an under- or over-powered amplifier or plugged them directly into a 120-volt outlet. Some recent speakers might even survive such treatment, though I wouldn't recommend your trying to find out whether yours would. There has been considerable emphasis of late, however, on improving speakers' ability to withstand high-power inputs while putting out correspondingly high sound-pressure levels. Attention to woofer design and the use of ferromagnetic fluids in

the high-frequency drivers have generally improved speakers' power-handling ability—a good development, considering the widespread availability of wide-dynamic-range software and the eventual coming of digital playback systems.

Other research efforts have been directed toward that elusive quality called "imaging." Measures recently taken to improve a speaker's ability to present a "stereo stage" in proper perspective generally fall into two categories: matched frequency responses and controlled room interactions. Into the former category fall symmetrical (sometimes vertical) driver arrangements, computer-controlled driver matching, and attention to the phase and amplitude characteristics of cross-over networks. Room interactions have been dealt with by various attempts to control speaker directivity (acoustic

treatment of the front panel, wide-front panels, rounded cabinet edges, non-rectangular enclosures), to control driver/room interactions (woofers close to the floor with appropriate crossover design), and by more specific recommendations from manufacturers as to where their speakers should be placed relative to adjacent walls and the floor.

A substantial change has occurred since the 1960s in the basic philosophy

of speaker design. Nowadays, many speakers are designed to be neutral and accurate, to have no decided sonic character of their own. Thus, the best of today's speakers sound more like each other than did models of five to ten years ago. Nonetheless, audible differences do exist, and replacing your speakers with a carefully chosen new pair may produce a rather significant improvement.

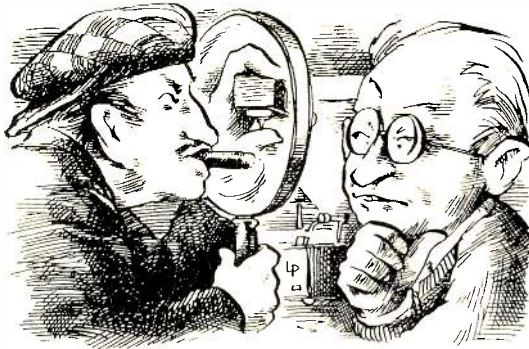
more recent arms are better suited to modern phono cartridges.

Newer turntables, thanks to refinements in direct- and belt-drive mechanisms, are more free of wow and flutter than any that have gone before. Whether the low measured levels of these phenomena are below human thresholds of detectability (especially considering the wow and flutter generated by an even slightly off-center or warped pressing) is subject to debate, however. And there are still widely varying levels and spectra of turntable rumble, some of which can contribute to differences in turntable sound quality. In general, today's rumble levels and spectra are more acceptable than those of older turntables ever were.

Tone arms have kept up with developments in cartridges. Yesteryear, high-compliance cartridges in high-mass tone arms led (they still can) to trouble, starting with skipped grooves, poor tracking of warped records, and increased low-frequency noise. Cartridge compliance has lately remained relatively constant while arm mass has fallen, so many cartridge/arm systems today have their primary resonance frequency at 10 to 12 Hz—high enough to be out of the main disc-warp area, yet low enough to avoid affecting the audible range significantly. Damping, available on some tone arms, also controls, to some degree, the level and frequency of the cartridge/arm resonance.

Another new design trend, though not a new concept, is tangentially tracking tone arms. With these, the stylus traverses a disc's radius rather than an arc across its surface. The claimed benefits of this arrangement include reduced tracing distortion and the elimination of skating forces. But, again, these benefits may not be audible even when they are quite measurable. In any case, the automatic cueing features available with tangentially tracking turntables are usually more versatile, permitting lateral as well as vertical cueing.

Not too long ago, if you purchased a "manual turntable" you got a unit with no automatic features. Nowadays, most non-changer turntables have such automatic features as automatic stylus set-down and arm return. While the purist might argue that these features add needlessly to the cost and complexity of a turntable, they certainly reduce the possibility of stylus- and speaker-damaging mishandling of the tone arm. Many of the newest turntables now have their controls on the front apron of the unit outside the dust cover (some models still have the cueing control irritatingly installed under-cover, though). Thanks to integrated-circuit



Phono Cartridges

Despite pristinely clean discs, gentle handling, and periodic stylus cleaning, phono cartridges still wear out. The stylus, under constant wear from the disc surface, is generally the only thing to give way, though the elastomer suspension and damping elements have been known to fail under some environmental conditions. How do you know that your stylus is worn? If you hear distortion or a decrease in high-frequency response playing a disc of known good quality with a properly adjusted cartridge and a freshly cleaned stylus . . . it's already too late. The disc used for the test has probably already been slightly damaged by the worn areas of the stylus.

If your cartridge is fairly young (less than five years old), yearly stylus replacement is good insurance, particularly if you average more than two hours of playing time a day. And make sure to get a replacement made by the same company that made your cartridge. (Happily, some manufacturers incorporate their latest developments into replacement styli for their older cartridges.) If your cartridge is older than four or five years, this is the time to seriously consider upgrading by buying a new one. Several developments have come along in the last few years which make cartridge replacement the preferred approach.

For example, older cartridges will probably have difficulty tracking the new wide-range discs successfully (one unsuccessful tracking generally means some disc damage at the point of the

failure); modern, top-of-the-line models have considerably greater tracking ability than equivalent older models.

Another important development resulted as a bit of fallout from the quadraphonic debacle: new stylus shapes designed to provide more accurate groove tracing without increased record wear. All of the new stylus shapes increase the stylus' vertical "footprint" while decreasing it in the direction of groove travel. Together, these measures make the stylus track more like the cutting stylus while maintaining low pressure on the groove wall.

The race toward higher-compliance cartridges of a few years back has now stabilized, makers having realized that cartridges with *too* high a compliance create tone-arm-interface problems, particularly with warped records. Various tone-arm/cartridge resonance-damping techniques have been developed, some of them integral to the cartridge, others as add-ons. Further, overall cartridge weights are generally lower, making it easier to obtain the desired cartridge/arm resonance frequency of 10 to 12 Hz with the somewhat massive tone arms popular in recent Japanese turntables.

Turntables

A turntable, a tone arm, and a cartridge (and perhaps also the place where the turntable sits) constitute an interacting system. Modern turntable and tone-arm development has generally recognized the significance of this interrelationship, with the result that modern turntables and the best of the

UPGRADING...

"In many cases, the best no-cost upgrading you can treat your system to is moving the speakers and/or changing listening rooms."

technology, some models can be remotely controlled at little extra cost.

Unfortunately, one of the most problematic areas of turntable design—isolation from the playing environment—is not handled very well by many available designs. A turntable might be per-

fectly respectable in all performance areas, but it still might also respond to any footfall, passing truck, or speaker output, faithfully passing the unwanted vibrations through the cartridge to the speakers. The worst part of it is that the best way to determine a turntable's immunity from your local seismic disturbances is still to bring it home and test it there. My favorite solution to the problem is to place the turntable in a well-braced environment *separate* from the listening room (like a closet or adjoining room). There are a number of special bases and mounting feet available that can cure specific problems, but not all of them. A certain amount of trial and error will probably be necessary to find a cure for a severe turntable-isolation problem.

dB or more of noise reduction. However, none of the new systems are compatible with each other, nor with older noise-reduction systems and non-decoded playback. They are also, if only theoretically, more sensitive to any departures from ideal operation in the tape recorder they're attached to.

Other related recent advances in cassette technology cope with high-frequency tape saturation, a severe problem when recording live music or wide-dynamic-range discs. This has been tackled in different ways by the Dolby HX system and the Tandberg Dyneq system. Both permit the use of less-than-premium-cost tapes for difficult recordings.

Amplifiers

In terms of distortion specifications, amplifiers (and amplifier sections of receivers) have improved tremendously in the last decade. Harmonic distortion in particular has received almost obsessive attention. The "triple-zero" per cent specifications now touted for some of the latest equipment are quite below any human being's ability to hear under any conceivable condition. So, in terms of distortion, your older amplifier may still be quite good enough. There has been progress in other areas, however, some of it more audibly meaningful.

Modern preamps and preamp sections of receivers and integrated amplifiers now generally have phono sections with much more accurate RIAA de-emphasis than was the custom a few years ago. These same phono sections also interact less with the various (and varying) output impedances of phono cartridges. The result is that phono preamplifiers, like speakers, sound more alike than they ever have before.

Two features have been appearing in preamps and integrated amplifiers more frequently. The first is a preamp for moving-coil cartridges. Its inclusion in an amplifier means you don't have to purchase a separate (sometimes outrageously priced) preamp or transformer for a low-output moving-coil cartridge. The second feature is an infrasonic filter. Filters of recent manufacture are generally better than the "rumble" filters of years back, first because they offer greater attenuation of power-robbing infrasonic energy than the old rumble filters. Moreover, rumble filters used to start rolling off as high as 50 or 60 Hz; infrasonic filters operate from about 20 Hz on down and have little or no effect on the musical content.

At the other end of the chain, high-power receivers seem to have gone out of fashion (probably because they were



Tape Recorders

No piece of hi-fi equipment responds better to maintenance than a tape recorder, so before you go out on a buying binge to improve performance, first make sure that your old machine's electronics and heads are aligned and its heads aren't worn. (Head replacement can be very expensive.) If you decide to buy, there are many—perhaps too many—choices facing you. The most fundamental dilemma is the choice between open-reel and cassette. This will probably be determined by the number of tapes already in your collection in each format. If you are not bothered by what some find to be the inconvenience of open-reel, there's no good reason to change to cassette. Doing so would lose you the ability to edit and splice conveniently, if nothing else.

On the other hand, cassette recording technology has improved tremendously since its introduction as a high-fidelity medium. Among developments in the cassette medium which have not yet been wholeheartedly applied to open-reel are longer-lasting and better-performing head materials, electronic control of capstan motors, user-adjustable bias and equalization settings, self-biasing and equalizing electronics, self-

aligning heads, and lower-noise, wider-dynamic-range tape formulations. Under most circumstances, a well-made cassette recorder of recent manufacture, properly adjusted and aligned, can give excellent performance even compared with an open-reel deck. (A cassette unit can also sound better than an open-reel machine if the latter is used without a noise-reduction system.)

A word about tape formulations: a tape recorder (and especially a cassette deck) will give its best performance if its bias and equalization are set up for a specific type of tape *or* if a high-quality tape is found that responds optimally to the factory settings of the deck. You can save time and money by finding a competent service technician to help you in this, or you can do your own experimenting with the many tape types. Some cassette machines have self-contained computer controls that will even do it all for you. (And some cassette-deck test reports list the types of tape used in the evaluation; those in STEREO REVIEW do.)

If you are dissatisfied with the amount of noise reduction available from the most popular noise-reduction systems commonly included in cassette decks, several companies have introduced outboard systems that provide 20

so unwieldy), although there are still quite a few high-power integrated and power amplifiers around. Today we need high power more than ever to supply the peak power demands made by wide-dynamic-range digitally mastered, dbx-encoded, and direct-to-disc recordings. Whether or not your present system will "run out of gas" at loud program peaks with your present amplifier and speakers is a complex question, however, revolving around just how loud you think "loud" is. (See Roy Allison's article on "Loudspeaker Power Requirements" in August 1980 STEREO REVIEW.) Suffice it to say that more amplifier power doesn't hurt, though you don't need it with very-high-efficiency vented or horn-loaded loudspeakers. But most speakers produced nowadays are not very efficient, making the amplifier power requirements for live-sound loudness levels all the more stringent.

Recently, increasing attention has been focused (mostly by U.S.-based companies) on the ability of amplifiers to drive "real-world" loads—in other words, the sometimes very complex impedances of loudspeakers rather than the simple load resistors used in laboratory test measurements. In the past, many otherwise fine amplifiers misbehaved when driving some of the strange loads presented by many speakers at certain frequencies and drive levels. The resulting problems, including ultrasonic oscillations, nonsymmetrical signal clipping, and large spurious output transients, are particularly aggravated by amplifier clipping and overload. Many of these problems, oddly enough, were the result of actions taken by the amplifier's built-in protection circuitry. Most of today's designers have become aware of these potential problem areas and are more careful in the design of such circuits.

create an even more realistic illusion of acoustic space extending completely around the listener.

Also influencing the sense of acoustic space created by a stereo system are the image-enhancing devices only recently made available (the basic operating principles of these devices were known in the Sixties, as were those of time delay). Basically, image enhancers try to compensate for the fact that each ear hears the sound from both speakers by canceling much of the right-speaker sound reaching the left ear and the left-speaker sound reaching the right ear. With a suitable recording the effect can be startling, even lifelike, with a good sense of ambiance from the rear and with only two speakers.

Other potentially useful add-ons include dynamic-range expanders (these should not become obsolete even with future digital-playback systems, for you will still have many pre-digital recordings); equalizers (which can do more to improve the sound quality from commercial discs than any other component); specialized readouts such as spectrum analyzers and output-power meters; and record-noise suppressors.



Tuners

If you are plagued with two of the most common faults of FM reception—noise and multipath distortion—a roof-mounted antenna (with a rotator if necessary), not a new tuner, may be the answer, and a cheaper one at that. The quality of FM reception has long been limited mainly by two things: the receiver's geographical relationship to the transmitter and the quality of the audio signal being sent through that transmitter. Aside from connecting an antenna, there's not much you can do about your location except move. There's even less you can do about broadcast-signal quality except write enraged letters to the station management and the FCC.

What *has* undergone a general improvement—indeed, a revolution—is the tuning accuracy and stability available from even low-cost FM units. The widespread application of integrated circuitry and non-inductive i.f. filters to tuner design has made for superb short- and long-term tuning accuracy and stability. Integrated-circuit stereo demod-

ulators now provide excellent channel-separation specifications at very low cost. And advanced techniques such as digital frequency synthesis have made pushbutton-accurate AM and FM tuning with memorized station settings not only practicable but easy and cheap.

Accessories

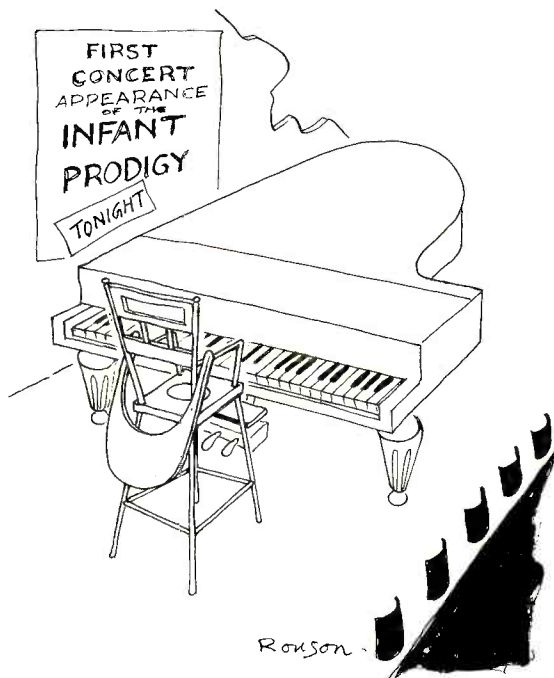
There exists at least one path to audio nirvana that involves not the replacement of equipment but the addition of new types of components. Much in the way of new functions has been introduced since our last upgrading suggestions in 1974. The innovations stem, as did the ones in tuner design, from integrated-circuit (IC) technology, which has made some functions practicable for the first time.

The best examples of this are the time-delay units. Adding more speakers can upgrade the sound of almost any stereo system, even by so simple a method as an ambiance hookup and regardless of the type of music being played. Properly used, time delay can

Postscript

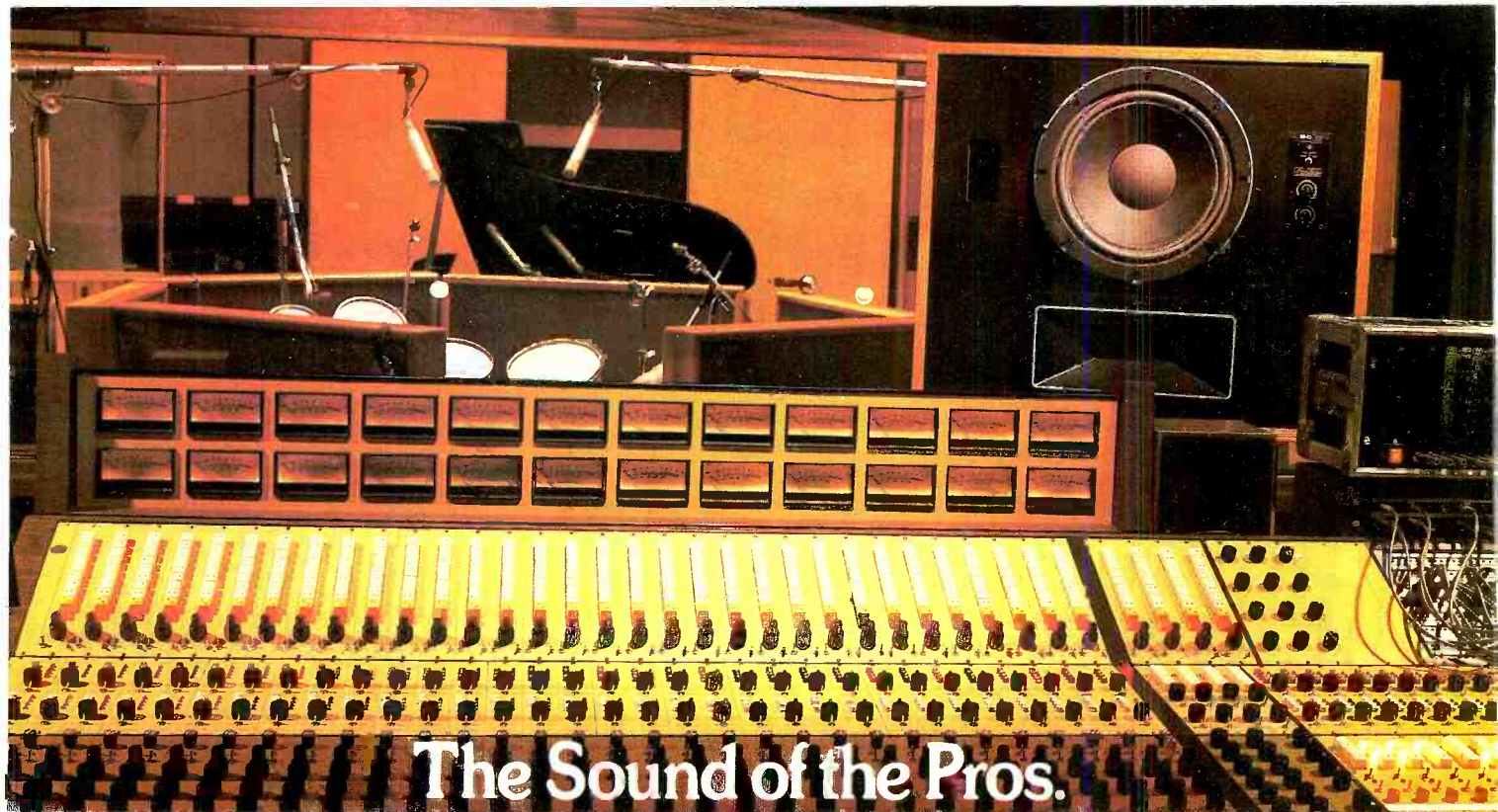
One accessory omitted in the last section is a dbx disc decoder. This device, together with specially encoded records, provides the only commercially available source of signals embodying the dynamic range we can ultimately expect from an all-digital playback system. Use of such a wide-dynamic-range system forces re-evaluation of our equipment's capabilities *and* the conventions and assumptions we've all developed over the years in listening to limited-range recordings.

But such reassessment is constructive, and it has happened with each major revolution in recording: electrical recording in the Twenties, the long-playing record in the Forties, and stereo in the late Fifties. However, with a fully digital playback system many of the sources of sonic differences in the record-playing part of your system will no longer be significant. Tone arms, turntables, cartridges, phono preamps, and analog-disc-related accessories will cease to be important factors given the superior sonic quality of a digital playback system. Except for speakers and power amplifiers, advice on upgrading will then be less a tale of improved performance than a recitation of features. If another six years pass before the next STEREO REVIEW article on upgrading, the age of digital playback will very likely be upon us, and the article will be much, much shorter. □



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1515 S. Manchester Ave., Anaheim, CA 92803.





LACY DALTON

The hottest
new country
ticket going

By Alanna Nash

It's showtime at the Wild Times Corral, meanest cowboy bar to be found anywhere in St. Louis' Chase-Park Plaza Hotel. A few late-comers straggle in past the eight-foot-high white polyester cacti, some of them gen-u-wine drugstore outlaws, most of them conventioning librarians. Over by the window, waiting to go on, sits Lacy J. Dalton, a.k.a. Jill Croston, recent recipient of the Academy of Country Music's Top New Female Vocalist award.

Dressed in a sparkly red overblouse and jeans, Dalton drinks a beer and watches the customers' faces. Some of them smile, and she smiles back, but just now she's a hillbilly girl with the blues. Last night somebody stole her equipment truck, getting away with "everything," including her thirteen-year-old Martin D-28 guitar, a sentimental favorite. To top it off, she spent the morning at a local hospital for treatment of a bruised vocal cord, the latest episode in a two-week bout with throat problems that had materialized just in time for her New York debut.

"I feel old, fat, and broke tonight," says the diminutive thirty-four-year-old Dalton, nursing her beer. "I might even get maudlin." A moment later she steps up to the mike, and her fears are both confirmed and dispelled. The high notes prove too often shaky and bottom-heavy, with an outright croak here and there, and Dalton is forced to apologize to the audience. But the crowd isn't paying that much mind, because whatever vocal deficiency Dalton may have tonight she makes up for in spirit, taking the stage like a sassy, old-time dance-hall girl, prancing and strutting, pointing her finger in the air like an imaginary six-shooter.

Over in one corner of the bar, a middle-aged couple attempts to dance to Dalton's 6/8 version of *The Tennessee Waltz*, but for most of the group the hell-raising numbers go over best. No doubt performances like these have helped make Dalton the hottest new country ticket going. With only one album, "Lacy J. Dalton," to her credit [the just-released second album is reviewed on page 124—*Ed.*], Dalton has

stirred up the kind of attention usually reserved for superstars. First came appearances on the *Today* and *Tomorrow* shows, and then there was a full-page accolade in *Time*. Of course, the Academy of Country Music award didn't hurt any, and neither did the respectable chart ratings of three songs—*Crazy Blue Eyes*, *The Tennessee Waltz*, and *Losing Kind of Love*—from her Billy Sherrill-produced debut album.

But it is Dalton's voice that has made all the difference. It has been described as "cigarettes-and-tequila" and "whiskey-laced-with-honey." And, though there is often a rough, grainy, hoarse quality to it, that is only one of what seem to be a hundred textures Dalton can draw upon at will.

"I haven't always liked my voice," Dalton tells me the following morning, sitting on the floor of her hotel suite and poking at her gone-cold room-service breakfast. "When I first heard it on tape, I wanted to throw up. But there are a lot of *tones* in it. I like textures in voices, but it's really hard to do them. When I sing those blues tunes, it makes my voice rough, and then I have to be really rested to get the pure tones I use on *Losing Kind of Love*. It's like using different colors on a palette. Sometimes I use a little too much red.

"But I don't know many singers who use textures. Listen to, say, Emmylou Harris or even Dolly Parton. There's only one tone. You don't get a horn quality, or a flute quality—that's the kind of thing I like to do with my voice. But you have to be careful when you sing with different textures. You have to know where you're going before you get there."

IF Dalton has always known where she was going in her career as well, she surely chose a circuitous route. Lacy J. Dalton of Santa Cruz, California, started out life in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, as Jill Byrem, the daughter of a beautician/waitress mother and a father who was a guide on a hunting preserve. After dinner, her father used to pick guitar, banjo, and mandolin, but young Jill only listened. She was surprised to discover in the bathtub one night that she could sing *Someday My Prince Will Come* just like Snow White. Still, there was no ambition to become a singer, let alone a star, so the musical talent slumbered.

At age fourteen, Dalton left home and lived with friends while she attended high school. She developed a keen interest in art and hoped to go on to art school, but the tuition proved prohibitive. So the summer after graduation she settled down to further her self-guided study of "Catholicism and a few

dozen other" faiths. Then the brother of a Mormon friend convinced her that Brigham Young University had a top-flight art department, and Dalton packed up for Utah.

A semester and a half later, chafing against the strictures of the Mormon religion and tired of putting herself through school cleaning toilets, Dalton took off for Brainerd, Minnesota, to play folk music. She dyed her brown hair black and "sang awful protest songs. I was foul." On a trip back home, a friend "made me listen to old blues artists—Leadbelly and Robert Johnson—and turned me on to bluegrass." Soon she was performing in New York's Greenwich Village.

But her life was really to change during the summer of 1966, when she took a job selling jewelry at a Pennsylvania fair. There, across the midway, she looked into the eyes of "Cousin" John McElwain, a psychedelic-poster salesman, "and I knew that man was part of my destiny." The two headed west to California and formed an acid-rock band. After some regional success, Dalton herself was offered solo recording contracts, but she decided to stay with her friends. The band broke up, but by then she and the group's manager, John Croston, had fallen in love and married. In the meantime, Dalton began writing country music.

Jill Croston might have remained just a regional favorite had it not been for a freak accident that left her a widow at twenty-seven. In 1971 her hus-

Dalton's voice has made all the difference there is often a rough, grainy, hoarse quality to it, only one of what seem to be a hundred she can draw upon."

band dove into a pool and, pushing up from the bottom, hit his neck on another swimmer. He was totally paralyzed. A week after the accident Dalton discovered she was pregnant. After Adam, now nine, arrived in the welfare ward of a Los Angeles hospital, Dalton took her husband and the baby to a cabin in the mountains around Santa Cruz. She applied for food stamps and took some late-night singing jobs. Dalton, who now prays before every performance, says that the only thing that kept her going was her faith.

After her husband died in 1974, she turned to her "best money-making skill" and recorded an album in a Santa Cruz garage. She mailed a copy to her friend David Wood, a Los Angeles lawyer who had spent four years as a country DJ. Wood arranged for a demo tape and sent it to CBS Records in Nashville. In the middle of contract negotiations, Dalton, Wood, and CBS vice-president/executive producer Billy Sherrill went to dinner. Wood, anxious to sew up the deal, watched, horrified, as Dalton and Sherrill got into an argument over Bob Dylan. "I finally ended up by sticking a fork in his shoulder," Dalton remembers. Today she calls Sherrill "the most gentle man in the studio I could ever imagine."

BUT at the outset Jill Croston wasn't entirely sure she liked all this. Especially when she was told she'd have to change her name. "To me, it was part of that 'I'll have to go to Nashville and they'll make me bleach my hair, give me a boob job, and make me lose twenty pounds' business," she says.

"But nobody could remember 'Jill Croston.' So I bowed to their greater commercial experience and took the last name of the woman who taught me how to sing, Karen Dalton. She's the Billie Holiday of country blues. I learned from her that to be believable you have to sing your words as if you were talking to someone. You have to talk to the music and stay in tune.

"Nobody has a clear idea about me, you know. I don't, as either Lacy J. Dalton or Jill Croston." Certainly CBS doesn't have a clear idea about Lacy J. Dalton. She's been promoted as the country Janis Joplin, the female Waylon Jennings, and/or the first true woman outlaw of country music, the idea being, presumably, that Jessi Colter doesn't count. Critics have drawn further comparisons between her singing and writing skills and those of as diverse a group as Tammy Wynette, Bob Dylan, Tanya Tucker, Willie Nelson, Donna Fargo, Hank Williams, Emmylou Harris, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Tracy Nelson, Kitty Wells, and Edith Piaf.

The Joplin peg has been the most popular, of course, but Dalton's connection with the rock heroine is tenuous at best. There is the same general roughness of tone that came to both women from singing hard rock in the 1960s, but the comparison is now a familiar albatross hung around the necks of young, big-voiced female singers. Of all the comparisons she's endured, this seems to be the only one that really irks her.

"They want Janis Joplin back so bad

LACY DALTON...

that if they could dig her out of the grave and hook her up to some machine and make her run again, they'd do it," she says, pounding her fist on the floor. "I loved Janis. I thought she was wonderful. But I do not want to be her reincarnation. I don't want to be a hard-livin', hard-drinkin' mama. That isn't me. My stage persona is like that, when I'm playing in bars. But it's different in concert halls. I pick up the ambiance of the place that I'm in.

"There actually is a sensitive human being here with some intelligence, someone who doesn't want to throw her life away on drugs and alcohol. I don't take drugs at all. Ever. A lot of people think, 'Janis was so honest and so real that the world just broke her.' But I don't intend to break. I intend to conduct my life in a way that I'll be proud of at the end of it." Her tone changes from defiant to rueful. "They like to play up the idea that I'm an outlaw, that I'm hard and tough," she adds slowly. "But I'm not."

THAT same mixture of strength and weakness is to be found in Dalton's songs, stories of high-rollin' honeys and honky-tonk men, cowboys and lovers and overnight friends. One thing that sets Dalton apart from other female country singers is the music she's chosen to help engrain her characters in our psyches. The stone-cold, foot-stompin', twin-fiddle country is there for the asking, but so are the ballads and blues and raucous roadhouse rock. And if that's not more than you get from most country queens, just hold on. Before you know it, up comes a bit of MOR pop, a hint of polka, and even a touch of "protest country."

"I think I'm probably the only female country singer right now who is involved in as progressive a sound as I am," Dalton says, with none of the Southern twang that creeps into her speech on record. "I know Emmylou is kind of into bluegrass as well as country, and Dolly is into pop in addition to her country. I'm not only doing all that, but I'm also doing blues and a little bit of rock-and-roll. I don't think that makes me any *better*; it just makes me different."

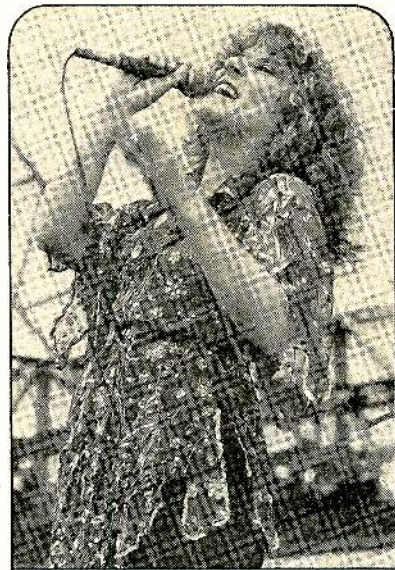
Still, what really makes Dalton enormously special is her lyrics. Although she collaborated with no fewer than six different writers on the songs for her first album, Dalton is surely a mandatory addition to the short list of

country-music lyricists who are out to do more than merely entertain. The understated *Angst* in such songs as *Losing Kind of Love* is far more moving than any overt emotional gush. And, while Dalton claims to have no sense of humor, she cuts through the commercial cowchips of so much of today's country music with scalpel-sharp wit, slicing out vignettes of beer-and-bologna existence rooted deep in her own experience. For instance:

And then there's ol' Dottie
Down at the truck stop,
Been there since we were sixteen.
The only thing different
Twenty years later
Is the hip size on ol'
Dottie's jeans.

©1980 Algee Music Corp.

"My songs are pretty autobiographical," Dalton says. "I wrote that *Beer Drinkin' Song* for the people in those little neighborhood bars back in Penn-



MARK WELSH LYRIC OUTLINES INC.

"Right now, I'm not trying to live up to anybody's expectations except my own, and they're so high that it's always a stretch."

sylvania, where they play polkas interspersed with country music. I'd been wondering for a long time why nobody had written an *American* beer-drinking song."

And the line about ol' Dottie's jeans?

"That was definitely my line," she says, laughing, "because I have *lived* it. I'm 5' 1 1/2" tall, and there was a time in

my life when I was drinking beer and taking birth-control pills. I weighed 187 pounds, and I could just sort of watch my hip size expand. I got to see what it was like being ol' So-and-So at the truck stop. And it was good for me because I'd always been the Cute Little Thing, and all of a sudden I wasn't. I couldn't just look up and bat my baby blues and get anything I wanted any more. I knew the pain of being separate, of not being cool."

But as autobiographical as most of her songs are, Dalton can step outside herself to make a musical commentary on what she sees around her.

"There's a new song on my first album that I wrote with my old man (John Fitzgerald) right after John Wayne died, called *Are There Any Cowboys Left (In the Good Ol' U.S.A.)*. That song is a lot deeper than most people think. It's about as close to a social commentary as I ever get. The cowboy is the archetype right now for the patriotic, old-fashioned American who cares about his country. We have very little to believe in any more. We don't believe in our government, certainly. But we can believe in a cowboy. A cowboy is real to us.

"I read some review of that song that said it was a honky-tonk throwaway. I don't put *anything* on an album that's a throwaway. I really care about what I put down. I don't do it *just* for the money. I'm in this business to make money, sure. I want to do well enough to own a farm, to have some permanency, to call a little corner of the earth mine. So far the financial reward has been absolutely zilch, but I do it because there's also something in me that needs expression. And if I don't have something good to give people to listen to, then I won't put anything down at all."

IF, despite everyone's best efforts, it just doesn't happen for Lacy J. Dalton, will Jill Croston be terribly disappointed?

"I operate my life so that whatever happens, happens. I've had some very heavy experiences in my life, and all the rest of this is just peanuts. If I died today, I would have seen an awful lot in thirty-four years. Seems like I've lived a million lifetimes. I guess the one side of life I have left to experience is being very, very rich, and I'd like to do that one before I croak."

She laughs, and then turns serious. "The important thing is that I really do have a feeling of divine purpose in my life. If that leads me to super-stardom, wonderful. If it doesn't, wonderful too. I'm just here to experience it all, do the most amount of good that I can do, and keep on finding out who I am." □

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Papageno, with panpipe, carries his birdcage
(Engraving by J.-H. Ramberg, 1826)

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH



• Deutsche Grammophon's Digital *Magic Flute*: A Beauty •

A NEW recording of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, under the direction of Herbert von Karajan, is Deutsche Grammophon's first effort in digitally mastered recording. It's a beauty. As you may recall, the overture to *The Magic Flute* opens with great orchestral chords separated by silences. One "climbs" these chords, so to speak, and descends the other side on their reverberations, down, down, listening for bottom (tape-hiss level) and not finding it, finding only—if your pressing is good—deep, black silence. Oh joy! The background silence has its *peculiar* effects too. *The Magic Flute* is a *Singspiel*, meaning that, unlike Mozart's Italian operas, it contains long, musically unaccompanied spoken passages instead of sung recitative. The sound of those speaking voices coming out of (and returning to) dead silence is eerie. It is as if the opera were being played in outer space. But then the locale of *The Magic Flute* is not your typical bustling street corner; it is, rather, an Egypt of librettist Emanuel Schikaneder's imagination, and most of the action too is fairly inexplicable by normal human standards. So the recording ambiance (I refer only to the spoken portions) may be strangely appropriate, but it does take some getting used to.

So far as the *musical* performance is concerned, I *can* find flaws, but if I were ever blessedly fortunate enough to attend a stage performance of this quality, I can promise you that I would come out of the theater reeling. Most musical masterpieces are almost indestructible; get the bare notes out and enough will come across to carry the day. But when you hear a masterpiece

really played for all it's worth, it produces an elation that just can't be matched. Karajan directs such a performance here. It's tight and it's controlled and no one gets the chance to break out of the pre-set mold, but it's stunningly effective. *The Magic Flute* contains some wildly disparate material: some of the noblest music Mozart (or anyone) ever wrote and some of the most broadly comic; prayers and invo-

out ever stepping beyond its bounds. The sophisticated listener will find few oddities of tempo or accentuation here; everything flows naturally, gracefully, expressively within the limits of Classical style.

Given such a performance, it is impossible to single out a singing "star," and, in fact, the vocal contributions are almost all on an equally high level. Edith Mathis is virtually all I could want in a Pamina; certainly I have never heard better. José van Dam is obviously too much a baritone for Sarastro—I miss the rolling low tones of an Alexander Kipnis—but he completely comprehends the nobility of the part and his intelligence *almost* makes up for the missing sonority. The young Mexican tenor Francisco Araiza sings a wonderfully accurate and idiomatic Tamino. His "*Dies Bildnis*" may be a trifle bland, but it is neatly sung and he excels elsewhere. Peter Schreier has some real competition now in the role.

Karin Ott brings to the Queen of the Night a rather heavier instrument than I am used to hearing in those stratospheric parts. But she uses it with marvelous agility and a fine sense of the right pitch; the added weight of voice, if anything, intensifies the violence of the expression (and without getting Wagnerian about it). Gottfried Hornik is a perfectly splendid Papageno, bringing back memories of the great Erich Kunz. Like Kunz, Hornik does not interpret too broadly; his Papageno is a Classical comic character, not a slob. There is elegance in his singing and acting as well as humor. Janet Perry gives him a perfectly matched Papagena, and their duet is so charming as to bring

MOZART: *The Magic Flute*.

Edith Mathis (soprano), Pamina; Francisco Araiza (tenor), Tamino; José van Dam (bass-baritone), Sarastro; Karin Ott (soprano), Queen of the Night; Gottfried Hornik (baritone), Papageno; Janet Perry (soprano), Papagena; Claudio Nicolai (bass), Speaker; Anna Tomowa-Sintow (soprano), First Lady; Agnes Baltsa (mezzo-soprano), Second Lady; Hanna Schwarz (mezzo-soprano), Third Lady; Heinz Kruse (tenor), Monastatos; Heiner Hopfer (tenor), First Priest; Leopold Valenta (bass), Second Priest; others. Chorus of the German Opera, Berlin; Berlin Philharmonic. Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2741 001 three discs \$32.94. © 3382 001 \$32.94.

cations and vaudeville turns; arias of rage and boy trios. Karajan holds it all together and achieves that magic standard of diversity in unity, of richness that fills the dimensions of a style with-

"Richness that fills the dimensions of a style without stepping beyond its bounds. . . ."



**BEST OF MONTH:
RECENT SELECTIONS
YOU MAY HAVE MISSED**

CLASSICAL

- **Bernstein: *Serenade for Violin, Strings, Harp, and Percussion; Fancy Free.*** DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 196. "The excitement is palpable, the playing full of life." (July)
- **Grieg: *Complete Music for String Orchestra.*** BIS LP-147. "Clear, fresh, inspired, and piquant." (August)
- **Handel: *Ariodante.*** PHILIPS 6769 025. "The finest recording of a Handel opera yet." (July)
- **Martini: *Symphony No. 2; Symphony No. 6 (Fantasies Symphoniques).*** SUPRAPHON 4 10 2096. "One of the most welcome orchestral releases of the year." (October)
- **Petersson: *Symphony No. 8.*** DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 176. "Extraordinary communicative weight and convincing musical logic." (August)
- **Ruggles: *The Complete Music.*** CBS M2 34591. "Material of the highest interest vividly presented." (October)
- **Rutter: *The Beatles Concerto. Rutter/Goodwin: Six Beatles Impressions.*** MOSS MUSIC GROUP MMG 1121. "Lush, sweeping, virtuosic." (September)
- **Saint-Saëns: *Symphony No. 3, in C Minor, Op. 78 ("Organ").*** TELARC 10051. "Close to the ultimate in beauty of orchestral sound." (August)
- **Verdi: *Luisa Miller.*** DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 096. "Excellent, with completely captivating singing by the two leads." (September)

POPULAR

- **The Canadian Brass and Friends: *Unexplored Territory.*** MOSS MUSIC GROUP MMG 1119. "Happy musical surprises, stunningly recorded." (September)
- **Eric Clapton: *Just One Night.*** RSO RS-2-4202. "Good musicians getting the hang of live recording." (August)
- **Al Di Meola: *Splendido Hotel.*** COLUMBIA C2X 36270. "Awesomely exciting tapestry of sound." (October)
- **Isaac Hayes: *And Once Again.*** POLYDOR PD-1-6269. "Cooler, more mellow, but as soulful as ever." (August)
- **Carole King: *Pearls.*** CAPITOL SOO-12073. "Not only a classy album, but a timely one." (September)
- **Jerry Lee Lewis: *When Two Worlds Collide.*** ELEKTRA 6E-254. "Delightfully cuckoo and utterly winning." (July)
- **New York, New York: *Sounds of the Apple.*** STASH ST 204. "A nifty jazz offering disguised as a tribute to the Big Apple." (July)
- **Bernadette Peters. MCA MCA-3230.** "Sensationally good." (August)
- **Smokey Robinson: *Warm Thoughts.*** TAMLA T8-367M1. "Understated brilliance." (July)
- **Carly Simon: *Come Upstairs.*** WARNER BROS. BSK 3443. "Enormous musical vitality combined with a fierce intelligence." (October)

tears as easily as the more expected laughter. The three Ladies, Monostatos, the Speaker, the Priests, the three Boys, and the Armed Men are all on the same high level. The Berlin Opera Chorus does everything expected of it, and the Berlin Philharmonic is the Berlin Philharmonic.

There is not a great deal of fancy recorded production in this set. The sound effects are simple and straightforward and only those called for. Vocal placement is apt and effective, but the singers do not wander around all over the place. The recorded balance is a bit more favorable to the orchestra than is usually the case. In all, it's a wonderful achievement. *The Magic Flute* has always been fortunate in its recorded representation and one could not really go wrong with any of three or four different recordings, but this one is as good as any, and to the ears of some it will be superior to all. —James Goodfriend

**Larry Gatlin's New
"The Pilgrim": Full of
Warm, Goodhearted,
Tuneful Surprises**

THAT late master of folk song John Jacob Niles, when he was a young man, aspired to write a song "that didn't end on the *do*"—on the tonic chord, that is—and eventually he did, rather a biggie called *Black Is the Color of My True Love's Hair*. Country's Larry Gatlin is similarly involved in the niceties of melody; when a tune takes a turn, he wants it to go in an unpredictable direction and yet not be awkward or inappropriate. In the past, some have clicked and some have been awkward and/or inappropriate, but in his new album for CBS, "The Pilgrim,"

LARRY GATLIN: taking chances out at the edges of his range



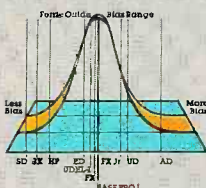
Ebel Roberts

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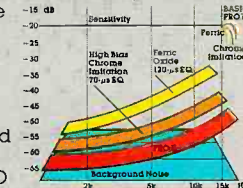
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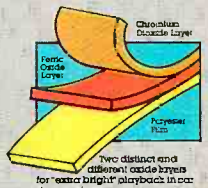


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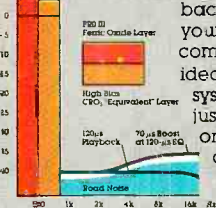
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we have a boodle of soft surprises repeatedly delightful in themselves and, combined with the words and performances, more than enough to give you an Experience.

It's a romantic record. Usually there's a semi-sweet orchestra behind the combo surrounding Gatlin, and usually such fullish arrangements bother me—but not this time. Gatlin's tunes come through a very rich and complicated sensibility, but you can hear that it has spent some time in church. His lyrics grow out of his background of writing for country singers, but when he writes "She caught me cheating/Then she caught the train/Then I caught a fever," it transcends (in this album anyway) the country convention of spotlighting gimmicky word play as the centerpiece of a song. Gatlin's throwaway handling of this sort of thing actually gives it dignity. There's a minimum of it anyway; "The Pilgrim" depends mostly on the strength rather than the trickiness of the imagery (and, of course, those tunes and the gently grandiose performances) to keep you listening.

Gatlin is also quite a singer, managing somehow to give the impression of having greater range than he actually does. Here, in keeping with the romantic nature of the songs, he does without the barbershoppish harmonies his brothers provide, but he takes a lot of chances out at the edges of his actual range. Few singers lately have seemed so committed. Few albums in any area

of pop music lately have seemed to me so warm and so irresistibly good-hearted.

—Noel Coppage

LARRY GATLIN: *The Pilgrim*. Larry Gatlin (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Sweet Becky Walker; My Mind's Gone to Memphis; Bitter They Are, Harder They Fall; The Heart; Try to Win a Friend; It Must Have Rained in Heaven; To Make Me Wanna Stay Home; Light at the End of the Darkness; Dig a Little Deeper; Penny Annie.* COLUMBIA PC 36541 \$5.98, © PCA 36541 \$5.98, © PCT 36541 \$5.98.

Taste and Intimacy: Murray Perahia Conducts and Plays Mozart Piano Concertos

I DON'T know if CBS (still "Columbia" on the disc labels) is releasing Murray Perahia's recordings of Mozart piano concertos in the same order in which he taped them, but they seem to get better and better as the series continues. The fifth installment, a disc on which he conducts the English Chamber Orchestra from the keyboard in No. 8, in C Major (K. 246), and No. 22, in

E-flat Major (K. 482), is the one that has given me the most pleasure. It is nothing less than a model of how this music ought to sound. Both performances are of that rare and exalted sort that cannot be achieved by what is ordinarily thought of as virtuosity alone, but which, taking virtuosity for granted, can be realized only by an artist whose innate taste and self-confidence enable him to approach this music as an opportunity for fulfillment rather than display.

The experience is, of course, richly fulfilling for the listener as well, and I don't think either of these concertos has ever been better served on disc—perhaps as well, in somewhat different ways, but never better. Intimacy is the keynote in Perahia's interpretations, which is not to say that brilliance is abjured or vigor suppressed, but that a closeness to the music is achieved in which every phrase has meaning and every gesture interacts with another in a chamber-music give-and-take, sustaining a magnetic intensity free of any hint of heaviness. The beauty of the playing, on the part of both Perahia himself and the superbly responsive orchestra, is beyond praise.

The CBS presentation is not, I'm afraid, although the sound is quite good and the surfaces on my review copy were reasonably quiet. These two works are not among the most familiar of Mozart's concertos—K. 246 is rarely encountered in our concert halls, and K. 482 is probably the least-performed of



Virgin Records

TWO RECORDS: Phil Brown and Will Birch

the great Viennese cycle—but all we find printed on the back liner are (a) blurbs for Perahia's earlier recordings, (b) nearly twenty column inches of biographical material on Perahia, (c) four paragraphs on the English Chamber Orchestra, and (d) a little essay justifying performances of Mozart concertos conducted by the soloist. There is not one word about either of the two works recorded here aside from the listing of their movements and the identification of the cadenzas in K. 482 (Hummel, modified, in the first movement). Mozart, Perahia, and the consumer deserve better in the way of documentation, but the record itself is a treasure; I should not want to be without it.

—Richard Freed

MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 22, in E-flat Major (K. 482); Piano Concerto No. 8, in C Major (K. 246)*. Murray Perahia (pian-

ist and conductor); English Chamber Orchestra. CBS M 35869 \$8.98, © MT 35869 \$8.98.

The Records' "Crashes": Sixties-inspired Humor, Refreshingly Benign And Therapeutic

AFTER having all but worn out the first side of the Records' new "Crashes," I pause just before starting to do the same with the second side to urge you to buy *two* copies of the al-

bum—and maybe an extra stylus as well. It is without a doubt one of the best albums of the year, and you will be playing it a *lot*.

Everything works with the Records. Their writing, singing, and playing become one force, an irresistible musical juggernaut. In the midst of a generally dreary and cosmetic time in pop music, when established groups are visibly sclerotic and newer groups play badly in funny outfits to attract attention, the Records have rediscovered the artistry and the sense of adventure that distinguished so many groups during rock's second golden age in the late Sixties while remaining very much of today.

They do not imitate, but the Records are obviously inspired and influenced by some of the major Sixties groups. How they have adapted these influences is what makes them so rewarding a band to hear. It is no small thing, for example, that they are able to combine some of the best lyrics since John Lennon in his prime with melodies worthy of Paul McCartney, Roger McGuinn of the Byrds, or "L. Ransford" (the pseudonym for the songwriting team of Graham Nash, Allan Clarke, and Tony Hicks during their Hollies days).

The wonderful *Girl in Golden Disc* has a real Hollies feel to it, sounding like a cross between *Bus Stop* and *Carrie Ann*; *Hearts in Her Eyes* and *Hearts Will Be Broken* recall the Byrds; *Spent a Week with You Last Night* has the sentiments of the Beatles' *I'm Looking Through You* combined with their arrangement for *I Want to Tell You*; and *I Don't Remember Your Name* is simply the best song about a surreal non-relationship since Lennon's *She Said She Said*.

The Records most often cast their melodies in a minor-chord frame, and nothing could better suit their witty lyrics about quirky situations and displaced personalities. Unlike nearly all other bands currently dealing with the same subject matter, they manage to get along very nicely without any hostility or self-pity. Their humor is refreshingly benign, detached, and therapeutic, never too cynical to hold our sympathy and yet always intelligent enough to discuss chaos without surrendering to it. Bravo! —Joel Vance

THE RECORDS: *Crashes*. The Records (vocals and instrumentals). *Man with a Girl Proof Heart; Hearts Will Be Broken; Girl in Golden Disc; I Don't Remember Your Name; Hearts in Her Eyes; Spent a Week with You Last Night; Rumour Sets the Woods Alight; The Worriers; The Same Mistakes; Guitars in the Sky*. VIRGIN VA 13140 \$7.98, © TP 13140 \$7.98, © CS 13140 \$7.98.

TWO MORE RECORDS: Jude Cole and John Wicks



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Classical Discs and Tapes



Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH
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J. S. BACH: *Prelude in C Minor (BWV 999); Fugue in G Minor (BWV 1000). Suite in E Minor (BWV 996): Allemande; Bourée.* **J. S. BACH (arr. Gerwig): Suite in E Major (BWV 1006): Louré; Gavotte; Menuet; Gigue. Suite in A Major (BWV 1007): Prelude; Allemande; Courante; Sarabande.** Walter Gerwig (lute). DESTO DC 7186 \$7.98.

Performance: **All right**
Recording: **Fine**

J. S. BACH (arr. Zelenka): Preludes: A Minor (BWV 895); D Minor (BWV 999); C-sharp Minor (BWV 929); D Minor (BWV 926); A Minor (BWV 940); E Minor (BWV 853); E Minor (BWV 934); D Major (BWV 1007). Fugue in A Minor (BWV 1001); Andante in C Major (BWV 1003). **J. S. BACH (arr. Segovia): Chaconne in D Minor (BWV 1004); Gavotte in E Major (BWV 1006).** Milan Zelenka (guitar). SUPRAPHON 1111 2263 \$8.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Glowing**
Recording: **Mellow**

Only half of what Walter Gerwig plays here is original Bach lute music; the rest of the program consists of Gerwig's transcriptions of selections from unaccompanied violin and cello suites (the BWV numbers refer to

the originals). The cello pieces sound rich enough on the lute, but the movements from the violin suite (BWV 1006) sound thin; they would be more satisfying on the lute if they were filled out a bit more. From Bach's original lute suite, we get only selections. Gerwig's playing is fastidious and permeated by lyricism, which is fine for *lourés* and *allemandes* but takes the starch out of a *courante*. All the dances, in fact, sound the same; they're pleasant enough, but there really should be a marked difference between a *gavotte* and a *gigue*.

Milan Zelenka, too, has mostly eschewed the original lute works. Though he also draws on the unaccompanied violin and cello repertoire, the main part of his program consists of a delightful group of preludes transcribed from Bach's harpsichord music. A real surprise is how beautiful the E-flat Minor Prelude from the first volume of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* sounds on the guitar (in E Minor). The highlight of the disc is Andrés Segovia's wonderful transcription of the *Chaconne* in D Minor. It is as convincing as the original, and Zelenka plays it with great poise, shaping the mosaic of variations into a unified whole. Zelenka's sound is rich and mellow, almost more like a lute than a guitar. Purists will be annoyed that his trills begin on the principal note, but they will also be relieved not to hear the slides and vibrato in which so many guitarists indulge. The character of each piece is carefully projected, which makes me wish he had included more dances. All in all, a very satisfying album. S.L.

BEETHOVEN: Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61. Kyung-Wha Chung (violin); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin cond. LONDON Ⓢ LDR 10010 \$9.98.

Performance: **Thoughtful**
Recording: **Spacious**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61. Erich Gruenberg (violin); New

Philharmonia Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein cond. NONESUCH H-71381 \$5.98.

Performance: **Elegant**
Recording: **Very good**

The printed timings for the two sides of the new London disc might lead one to expect an extremely unusual performance, but they happen simply to be reversed and the performance holds no surprises, though some listeners may find both outer movements a little on the cautious side. Kyung-Wha Chung has shown more spontaneity in other music; here the entire performance is characterized by restraint. It's a little more "thoughtful" than energetic, but by no means unappealing on its own lyrical terms. Both soloist and orchestra play very beautifully and neatly, and Chung and Kondrashin seem to be in complete accord. The digital recording is pleasantly spacious, though the focus on the timpani seems a bit cautious.

The surprises are on the Nonesuch disc. The recording, I understand, was made for *Reader's Digest*. It was somehow passed up by both RCA and Quintessence and was picked up last year by Teresa Sterne as one of her final projects for Nonesuch. No date is given; I would guess the mid-Sixties, when most of the *Digest* recordings were made, but the sound is rich and bright enough to pass for new. Erich Gruenberg, who has been concertmaster of the London Symphony and Royal Philharmonic orchestras, has not been known here as a soloist (except for his credits in Stokowski's two stereo recordings of *Scheherazade*), but he gives a stunning account of the Beethoven concerto. He shows an apparently instinctive sense of pacing and phrasing that simply relieves the listener of any questions about interpretation, and his tone is as striking for its warmth as for its purity. The animation in the outer movements (the sublime unfolding of the *largetto* in particular), Horenstein's eloquent control of the orchestra, and the exceptional integration of the solo and orchestral playing add up to the sort of listening experience one can nev-

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓢ = open-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓢ = stereo cassette
- Ⓢ = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓢ = digital-master recording
- Ⓢ = direct-to-disc

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓢ

The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

er take for granted, no matter what names may be involved. Elegant is the word for this sort of music making, and there are not many recordings of the Beethoven concerto in this class. The only challenger in this price range is the superb version by Josef Suk and Sir Adrian Boult with the same orchestra on Vanguard SRV-353SD, which offers an even sweeter tone on the soloist's part but a somewhat less compelling sense of overall momentum.

Though London provides a concise but pointed program note by Bernard Jacobson and Nonesuch provides so much background and analysis by Robert Winter that it had to be set in tiny type, neither company bothers to identify the cadenzas, which in both cases are by Fritz Kreisler. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: Piano Sonata No. 13, in E-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 1; Piano Sonata No. 14, in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight"). MOZART: Rondo in A Minor (K. 511); Rondo in D Major (K. 485). Malcolm Bilson (fortepiano). NONESUCH H-71377 \$5.98.

Performance: **Breathtaking**
Recording: **Excellent**

Now that the harpsichord has won its battle and is here to stay, keyboard players are exploring early versions of the piano. Certainly the most satisfying of the old pianos is the Classical Viennese fortepiano, affectionately referred to as the Mozart piano, which reached perfection during the 1790s. It is the instrument of Haydn, Mozart, and the early Beethoven. They wrote specifically for this instrument, and their music sounds best on it. Its crisp, clear sound is perfect for the Classically articulated melodic writing filled with lavish decoration. The passage work sparkles, and Alberti basses and similar accompaniment figures take on a prickly sense of urgency so frequently lacking on the modern instrument. All of these advantages are demonstrated here in the two Mozart rondos, which exploit the possibilities of the fortepiano to the full.

After hearing the delicate clarity of the Mozart works, though, I wondered how Beethoven's two sonatas "quasi fantasie" could possibly come off on the instrument; I expected the last movement of the *Moonlight* to sound like a ridiculous tempest in a teapot. In the first movement of the E-flat Sonata, I was struck by the bassoon-like quality of the opening left-hand runs and how, as is characteristic of the fortepiano, they take on the timbre of a flute when transferred to the treble. The *sforzandi* of the scherzo are admittedly on the raucous side, but the adagio reveals the instrument's ability to sustain a noble melody. The low range of much of the final movement takes on a clarity that is impossible on the modern instrument. The *Moonlight* was a revelation, though it is obvious in the *presto agitato* that Beethoven was pushing the fortepiano well beyond its capabilities. Probably Malcolm Bilson chose this coupling of Mozart and Beethoven precisely to demonstrate the new demands that the latter made on the instrument.

Bilson is no harpsichordist or pianist just recently turned to the fortepiano. He is a thoroughgoing exponent of the fortepiano,

especially the Classical Viennese version of it, and has spent years perfecting his playing style. His complete mastery of the instrument's treacherously light touch is remarkable; he knows just how much pressure it will take and how to balance the volume level of each individual part so that the musical essence of a piece will come forth. His articulation is finely detailed, but he keeps it in line by molding the long phrase in terms of both dynamics and rubato. His playing is not only exciting but warm and human. This is a wonderful record of performances previously released on Advent cassette E1056. S.L.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6, in F Major, Op. 68 ("Pastoral"). Philadelphia Orchestra, Riccardo Muti cond. ANGEL SZ-37639 \$8.98, © 4ZS-37639 \$8.98.

Performance: **Youthfully impulsive**
Recording: **Good**

Riccardo Muti here imparts a youthful energy to the opening pages of the *Pastoral* rather akin to what one might expect in the Schumann *Spring* Symphony, and on the whole it works, although a lack of air between the notes in the second half of the

opening theme gives me the feeling of being rushed into the countryside rather than enjoying a leisurely stroll. The woodwind balances are well forward, as they should be, and I suspect that post-mixing has played a role here, since my pressing has what seems to be a momentary mixing miscue in the left channel at the first-movement exposition repeat. Muti's reading of the Scene by the Brook presents a tonally lush landscape indeed, with the brook purling along briskly and the bird calls a bit larger than life, but his peasants are a little square and heavy-footed in their dancing for my taste.

The thunderstorm is a splendidly bang-up affair, but care has been taken not to let the racket overpower the musical line. I prefer a somewhat broader treatment of the Thanksgiving movement, yet I can understand the desire to underplay its repetitious elements. Muti's handling of inner linear and harmonic detail is as felicitous here as in his best previous work on records. The sonics are ample in presence and scale, with a suitably warm room tone. D.H.

L. BERKELEY: *Antiphon* (see IRELAND)

(Continued overleaf)



Ameling: More Mozart

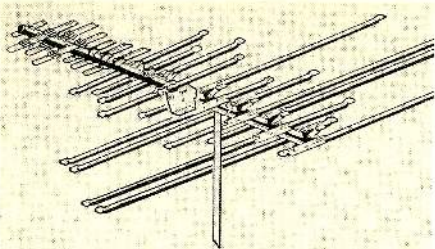
LAST year Philips released a two-disc set of all of Mozart's songs sung by Elly Ameling (6747 483). Seraphim has now released, for the first time in the U.S., an earlier recording in which the soprano sings only nineteen of them—but she was in a more relaxed vocal state at the time, words and music receiving equally careful attention in her intimately scaled, delicately phrased, and warmly natural renditions.

Mozart was not a great composer of songs, perhaps because he did not regard songs as a musically significant genre. We have about one-half of his total output here,

and it is certainly the better half: three that are significant in any company (*Das Veilchen*, *Das Lied der Trennung*, and *Abendempfindung*) and some others in which melodic enchantment easily transcends the slightness of material (*Die Zauberer*, *Die Alte*, *Sehnsucht nach dem Frühlinge*). The rest are Italian *ariette*, folksy ditties, opera-styled dramatic scenes, pastoral songs in the French manner, and two songs to French texts; one of the last (*Dans un Bois Solitaire*), while not particularly successful, is distinguished by restless and, for that period, unexpected modulations. Altogether, the sequence is enchanting. Without resorting to any histrionics or overemphasis, Miss Ameling never fails to find the right mood for each song. In *Die Alte* she affects a prim and aging tone to voice the eternal lament of the elderly over the declining morals of the young. Jörg Demus provides a pleasant accompaniment on a fortepiano of period authenticity but limited color. The recorded balances are exemplary.

—George Jellinek

MOZART: Songs. *Ridente la Calma* (K. 152); *Oiseau, si Tous les Ans* (K. 307); *Dans un Bois Solitaire* (K. 308); *Komm, Liebe Zither, Komm* (K. 351); *Sei Du Mein Trost* (K. 391); *Warnung* (K. 433); *Der Zauberer* (K. 472); *Die Zufriedenheit* (K. 473); *Das Veilchen* (K. 476); *Die Verschweigung* (K. 518); *Das Lied der Trennung* (K. 519); *Als Luise die Briefe Verbrannte* (K. 520); *Die Alte* (K. 517); *Abendempfindung* (K. 523); *An Chloë* (K. 524); *Das Traumbild* (K. 530); *Die Kleine Spinnerin* (K. 531); *Un Moto di Gioia* (K. 579); *Sehnsucht nach dem Frühlinge* (K. 596). Elly Ameling (soprano); Jörg Demus (fortepiano); Willi Rosenthal (mandolin, in K. 351). SERAPHIM S-60334 \$4.98.



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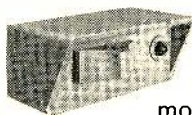
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M. BERKELEY: *Meditations* (see IRELAND)

BERLIOZ: *Cléopâtre; Herminie*. Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 9500 683 \$9.98, © 7300 778 \$9.98.

Performance: **Question marks**
 Recording: **Not brilliant**

It took Berlioz four tries to get the coveted Prix de Rome, and for each try we have a cantata or "lyric scene" on some classical or near-classical subject. Such set pieces for voice and orchestra were meant to be the musical equivalents of those great academic historical paintings of the period. These early works are generally thought to be mere student pieces, but Berlioz, who was in his mid twenties, was a very grown-up sort of student and not more than a couple of years from his artistic maturity.

Herminie from 1828, his second try, was apparently conventional enough to win second prize. It is a scene from Tasso set in a series of regulation recitatives and arias, but also with more than a few touches of Berliozian passion and originality (including the first version of some *Symphonie Fantastique* material).

Apparently Berlioz thought he was a shoo-in for the next year and cut loose in 1829. His cantata on the death of Cleopatra is pure Berliozian music drama. One might even say that if the French establishment had had the wit to recognize the originality and power of its conception, music history might have been different. As it turned out, Berlioz was denied—then and later—any real chance to create the music theater that was in his head (the task was left, perhaps unfortunately, to Wagner). In any case, *Cléopâtre* is a full flower of Romanticism, a dramatic scene equal to any in the history of opera. It culminates fantastically in Cleopatra's stupendous invocation of the pharaohs whom she has betrayed and an almost gruesomely graphic musical depiction of her death spasm. The judges gave no award in 1829. In 1830 Berlioz wrote an intentional potboiler and finally got to Rome.

This recording is part of Sir Colin Davis' Berlioz cycle for Philips. In spite of its repertoire interest, it leaves something to be desired. Dame Janet Baker is no Cleopatra; she lacks, at least here, the fire and the passion, and her "beautiful sound" is odd in this context. And something is also off in the orchestra. The winds, so important in Berlioz, do not seem to be tuned quite right and their sound doesn't quite jibe. *E.S.*

BERLIOZ: *Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14*. New York Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON ● LDR 10013 \$9.98.

Performance: **Unexceptional**
 Recording: **Clean, finely detailed**

On the face of it one would expect that the New York Philharmonic's digital debut on the London label would be something of a high-powered sonic spectacular, especially with the Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique*. However, after several hearings and spot comparisons, I cannot say that the sonics here reach the highest level that has been achieved with the new technology, and although Zubin Mehta gives a decent and relatively uncontroversial reading of the *Fan-*

tastique, it does not equal the stylishness of Martinon's, the passion of Bernstein's, or the poise of those by Colin Davis and Pierre Monteux. On the plus side, Mehta observes the first-movement repeat and adds the optional cornets in the ballroom scene, and the London producers have managed to give us the *Scène aux Champs* without any disfiguring side break midway.

The orchestral playing is good to excellent in terms of ensemble, but it lacks the razor-edge precision and rhythmic alertness necessary for a truly outstanding realization of this score. However, the solo English horn and offstage oboe in the opening of the *Scène aux Champs* are superb, and the absence of background noise afforded by digital mastering is a particular boon here and throughout this movement, which depends for so much of its effect on finesse and exquisitely gauged detail of line and phrasing. Another passage that comes off very well is the famous *col legno* "fire and brimstone" bit toward the end of the Witches' Sabbath. In general, though, I don't think the acoustic surround of the recording locale does justice to the program content. I have the nagging feeling that digital mastering demands *more* attention than usual, rather than less, to the acoustics of the recording locale and to the fine points of microphone placement. Otherwise, all we have are additional costs and a gimmick. *D.H.*

BRAHMS: *Serenade No. 2, in A Major, Op. 16*. WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll*. South German Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Ristenpart cond. NONESUCH H-71383 \$5.98.

Performance: **Affectionate**
 Recording: **Good**

In April 1967, eight months before his death, Karl Ristenpart, noted for his many splendid recordings with the Saar Radio Chamber Orchestra (which he founded in 1953), got his only chance to record with a full symphony orchestra, for Elektra/Nonesuch's short-lived Checkmate label. Regrettably, the orchestra assembled in Stuttgart was far from first-rank, and its shortcomings showed all too clearly in the Beethoven Seventh and *Eroica* produced in those sessions. The Schubert Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2 came off better and were transferred to Nonesuch H-71230 some time ago. Ristenpart's remakes of these Brahms and Wagner titles (he recorded both with his Saarbrücken forces earlier, but those versions were never issued in this country) are also engaging, if not quite the last word, and the remastered sound enhances the warmth of the performances.

The *Siegfried Idyll*, spun out to nearly twenty-two minutes, never drags but is most lovingly shaped and really steeped in the peculiar atmosphere of the piece. There are many fine recordings of this work, though, and preference for one or another might well be determined by the coupling. The Brahms serenade here receives another affectionate and robust reading, quite enjoyable and quite a good buy but not to be compared with the fine playing the winds and low strings of the London Symphony Orchestra give István Kertész on London CS 6594, which has the added advantage of being coupled with a stunning version (apparently the only one available now) of

(Continued on page 82)

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KIRIL KONDRASHIN: locale is critical in digital recording

Three Dvořák Symphonies

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK'S great final trilogy of symphonies fares exceedingly well in new releases on three different labels, one with a Canadian and two with notable Soviet-emigré conductors. Angel's recording of the Seventh Symphony with the London Philharmonic under Mstislav Rostropovich is far more convincing than the rather lugubrious *New World* Rostropovich recorded with the same orchestra about a year ago. If his interpretation of the emotionally charged D Minor is not as volatile as, say, Rafael Kubelik's, he has certainly penetrated deeply into the music's expressive content, and his somewhat more deliberate pacing impressively underlines the darkly brooding and defiant elements of this score. Also impressive is Rostropovich's command of a true rubato phrasing, which lends the lyrical lines an organic vitality. The slow movement here is dreamy and contemplative; the playing is totally committed. The recorded sound is absolutely first-rate throughout.

Andrew Davis and the Philharmonia Orchestra, on Columbia, give us a *Carnival Overture* and Eighth Symphony that are taut and exuberant without seeming overdriven. I rather prefer this approach to the fussiness of Herbert von Karajan's recent recording of the G Major, though I would have liked a shade more flexibility from Davis in the scherzo. Special praise is due the Philharmonia's first-chair flutist, whose role in conveying the music's bucolic essence is crucial.

London's digitally mastered *New World* with Kiril Kondrashin and the Vienna Philharmonic is another illustration of how important the recording locale is for getting the best results with the new technology. In

this case the first-rate sonic ambiance of Vienna's Sofiensaal contributes to a completely natural orchestral sound that is a joy to hear. The timpani in the opening bars sound most impressive but not overdone.

INTERPRETIVELY, Kondrashin neither tears Dvořák's passion to tatters nor opts for a stolidly Teutonic reading. He approaches this Romantic warhorse as if it were a middle-period Beethoven symphony, giving it an element of Classical *mésure* that one would not ordinarily expect—and it really works. The careful nuancing in the famous slow movement is exceptionally lovely, and in the scherzo the combination of precise playing and beguiling warmth of tone and phrasing verges on the miraculous. The finale has another lovely bit of detail work: the clarinet's line of counterpoint is balanced with the main lyrical theme more effectively than I can remember ever hearing it done before. All told, this one belongs among the top half-dozen *New World* Symphony recordings currently available.

—David Hall

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 7, in D Minor, Op. 70. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mstislav Rostropovich cond. ANGEL SZ-37717 \$8.98.

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 8, in G Major, Op. 88; Carnival Overture, Op. 92. Philharmonia Orchestra, Andrew Davis cond. COLUMBIA M 35865 \$8.98, © MT 35865 \$8.98.

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 9, in E Minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World"). Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin cond. LONDON ● LDR 10011 \$9.98.

Dvořák's Serenade in D Minor, the little masterwork more or less patterned after this Brahms serenade. R.F.

BRANT: Orbits—A Spatial Symphonic Ritual for Eighty Trombones, Organ, and Soprano Voice. Bay Bones Trombone Choir and assisting artists; Henry Brant (organ); Amy Snyder (voice); Gerhard Samuel cond. **SAMUEL: What of My Music!** Neiga Lynn (soprano); thirty-six string basses from the International Summer School for Double Bass of the International Society of Bassists; Allen Otte, James Culley, Michael Hakes (percussion); Gerhard Samuel cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. SD 422 \$7.95.

Performance: **Gargantuan**

Recording: **Fair**

Henry Brant is one of the genuine eccentrics of American music and, in a sense, Ives' only direct follower. Years ago he wrote a piece called *Millenium II* for a whole bunch of brass, a singer, and I forget what else; I long treasured an obscure recording of it, which, given any excuse, I would trot out to play for astonished guests. But *Orbits* (which is definitely *Son of Millenium II*) outdoes even its predecessor, at least in sheer weight of sound. For the première in 1979—possibly the only performance so far—the Bay Bones (as the name suggests, a group of trombone players from the San Francisco Bay area) and the entire trombone sections of several symphony orchestras were massed in St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco. Luckily the performance was recorded and is hereby released. Whew!

Gerhard Samuel's *What of My Music!* was commissioned by the International Society of Bassists for their summer school at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music, and this too was recorded at its première performance. The title is the first line of Emily Dickinson's poem "Put Up My Lute," which is here set to music in surprisingly delicate fashion. Unlike Brant, who leans heavily into the massed trombones of his ensemble, Samuel plays it light-fingered with his army of double basses. Except for a few solos, the voice and percussion generally lead, and I doubt that anyone listening without prior knowledge could correctly identify the piece's instrumentation.

The performances are both impressive, the recorded sound just fair. E.S.

CERTON: Missa Sus le Pont d'Avignon. Chansons. Je l'Ay Aymé; C'Est Grand Pityé; Amour à Tort; Entre Vous Gentilz Hommes; Plus Ne Suys Ce Que J'Ay Esté; En Espérant; Si Ta Beauté; De Tout le Mal; Je Ne Veulx Poinct; Martin S'En Alla au Lendit; Ce N'Est à Vous; Que N'Est Elle Auprès de Moy; Ung Jour Que Madame Dormoit; Hellas Ne Fringuerons Nous. Boston Camerata, Joel Cohen cond. HARMONIA MUNDI HM 1034 \$9.98 (from Brillly Imports, 155 North San Vicente, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211).

Performance: **Nice**

Recording: **Dull**

This sampling of the sacred and secular music of Pierre Certon will be most well-

(Continued on page 84)

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CHERUBINI: Requiem in D Minor. Czech Chorus, Prague; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Igor Markevitch cond. PRIVILEGE 2535 404 \$6.98, © 3335 404 \$6.98.

Performance: **Dark, strong**
Recording: **Very fine**

Luigi Cherubini was born in 1760 (Mozart was four years old) and died in 1842 (by

which time Wagner was well launched). Like Lully, he was a Florentine whose major career was in France, where he became director of the Conservatoire. This Requiem—for male chorus and orchestra without soloists—was written when he was well into his seventies. It is a great, noble, austere work in a style that can only be described (by analogy to the visual arts) as Empire or neo-Classical. This style—actually an early form of Romanticism—incorporates Baroque counterpoint into a Classical style that derives from Gluck. The supreme master of the style was a certain Ludwig van Beethoven, who once expressed interest in studying with Cherubini. Cherubini was no Beethoven, but, even in his late,

Conservatoire years, he was no mere old-fashioned academic either. The D Minor Requiem has consistent qualities of invention and real passion. It is not so much a personal expression as a Requiem for an era—the era of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

This release is a reissue on Deutsche Grammophon's mid-price label of a recording made in 1963. It is excellent in both sound and performance, and a must for anyone with a taste for the grander side of the early nineteenth century. E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DOHNÁNYI: Variations on a Nursery Song, Op. 25. R. STRAUSS: Bursleske in D Minor for Piano and Orchestra. LITOLFF: Concerto Symphonique No. 4, in D Minor, Op. 102: Scherzo. Philippe Entremont (piano); National Philharmonic Orchestra, Okko Kamu cond. COLUMBIA M 35832 \$8.98, © MT 35832 \$8.98.

Performance: **Champagne**
Recording: **Glitter galore**

Each of the works here is tailor-made for Philippe Entremont's coruscating piano style, and the result is fifty minutes of highly enjoyable listening. I was especially impressed by the treatment of the youthful Strauss piece, to which Entremont's nimble, totally dazzling keyboard work lends just the right champagne touch. Finland's Okko Kamu provides a singularly alert accompaniment, giving special care to the tricky three-way exchanges such as that among the piano, bassoon, and timpani. Indeed, I have never before heard the opening timpani theme set forth as clearly and deftly as it is here.

The enchanting Dohnányi spoof comes off as neatly as one could wish—but it should be noted that the composer's own recording is still listed in Schwann, along with formidable versions by the late Julius Katchen, Christina Ortiz, and Earl Wild. Entremont also plays the Litoff scherzo with exemplary dash and zing, including a generous helping of repeats. The recorded sound is transparent and airy, in keeping with the character of the music. D.H.

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 7, in D Minor, Op. 70. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA ARL1-3555 \$8.98, © ARK1-3555 \$8.98.

Performance: **Warmly lyric**
Recording: **Excellent**

Eugene Ormandy excels in conveying the lyrical aspects of this most passion-laden of Dvořák symphonies, and the Philadelphia string sound is heard to magnificent effect in the opening pages of the first movement and throughout the whole of the slow movement. I do find Ormandy's approach somewhat heavy-footed in the wonderful dancescherzo, however, and only in the last pages does he truly tap the fiery energy inherent in the cumulative sequence of build-ups in the finale. Sonically, though, this is a magnificent record: rich, spacious, and finely detailed in texture.

Interpretively, I still prefer the 1962 Pierre Monteux recording, currently available on London's budget-price Stereo Treas-

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Flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal with composer Claude Bolling

Baroque Jazz

VARIOUS blends of jazz and all that non-jazz have been getting a fair amount of recorded attention lately (possibly as a spin-off of the current jazz revival), and two recent CBS releases of works by Patrick Gowers and Claude Bolling can be placed in the category of what might roughly be called Baroque Jazz. This particular blend is based on the great similarity between traditional jazz changes and Baroque chord progressions—as opposed to so-called “Third Stream” music, which exploits the closeness of modern free jazz to the contemporary avant-garde.

Gowers denies that his music is Third Stream, and he does basically use the Baroque-synthesis approach, but though he thinks in chords and eschews improvisation, there are a few nods in a more contemporary direction. Both works on the new Gowers disc feature guitarist John Williams. The Chamber Concerto for Guitar (plus a small instrumental ensemble) is certainly an apt blending of jazz and “classical” music—it’s much more coherent and original than are Bolling’s supermarket rococo “suites”—but the Rhapsody for Guitar, Electric Guitars, and Electric Organ is more interesting. Unlike the concerto, it is not really a performance piece but a studio work, a tape amalgam. Williams recorded two tracks of electric guitar (played with classical technique!) and Gowers laid down sixteen tracks of electric organ, all of which were then used to back up Williams’ lead part on acoustic (classical) guitar (this part could be played live with the rest on tape). The result is rhapsodic to the point of being diffuse, but it has a certain wandering charm and inventiveness. The rhapsody is sonically effective, but the conventionally recorded concerto sounds studio-boxy.

Having already given us a Suite for Flute

and Jazz Piano and a Concerto for Classical Guitar and Jazz Piano, Claude Bolling now offers a *Picnic Suite* for flute, guitar, and (jazz?) piano. He has the formula down pat: some imitation eighteenth-century music for the solo instruments surrounded by drums, bass, and piano playing something that sounds vaguely like jazz. Much of *Picnic Suite*, in fact, sounds like the kind of music the French use to accompany TV commercials and cartoons—possibly because Bolling (who is, of course, French) has a lot of credits in TV and film.

BOLLING’S formula has long since exhausted his inspiration. This record does offer a good point for speculation, though: it would be interesting to hear Jean-Pierre Rampal and Alexandre Lagoya tackle a fat piece of real Baroque music—some Bach or Rameau, say—in the same spirit with which they play Bolling’s thin neo-Baroque neo-jazz. They just might, in the process, recapture a real Baroque performance style.

—Eric Salzman

GOWERS: Chamber Concerto for Guitar. John Williams (guitar); John Scott (alto saxophone, flute); Pat Halling (violin); Stephen Shingles (viola); Denis Vigay (cello); Herbie Flowers (bass guitar); Patrick Gowers (organ); Tristan Fry (drums); Godfrey Salmon cond. **Rhapsody for Guitar, Electric Guitars, and Electric Organ.** John Williams (guitars); Patrick Gowers (electric organ). CBS M 35866 \$8.98, © MT 35866 \$8.98.

BOLLING: Picnic Suite. Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute); Alexandre Lagoya (guitar); Claude Bolling (piano); Guy Pedersen (bass); Daniel Humair (drums). CBS M 35864 \$8.98, © MT 35864 \$8.98.

sury label. Rafael Kubelik’s fiercely impassioned 1971 reading with the Berlin Philharmonic for Deutsche Grammophon also has much to recommend it. *D.H.*

ELGAR: Enigma Variations, Op. 36. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: The Wasps, Overture; Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis. London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn cond. ANGEL SZ-37627 \$8.98, © 4ZS-37627 \$8.98.

Performance: **Good Elgar, better RVW**

Recording: **Rich**

Since he began recording with the London Symphony Orchestra in the Sixties, André Previn has given us a large and generally distinguished survey of English music—all the symphonies and several other works of Vaughan Williams, compositions by Britten, Walton, Holst, and even Constant Lambert—but this appears to be his first recording of any music by Elgar. His fresh approach to a work so encrusted with tradition is stimulating and effective, even if he seems a little less thoroughly at home in the *Enigma Variations* than in the overside Vaughan Williams items. Previn allows himself less freedom within a given variation than, say, Boult or Barbirolli in their numerous recordings of the work, indulging in none of the subtle little gear-shifts those conductors carried off with proprietary assurance. On the other hand, he sets off the respective variations in somewhat sharper contrast from one to the next, treating them as separate chapters or episodes with pronounced characters of their own rather than as elements in a continuous narrative, and the finale comes off here a bit less grand-scaled than some might like.

Since the Elgar performance fits snugly on a single side (with no sacrifice of sound quality, which is of a burnished richness especially flattering to both the work and the performance), there is room for two substantial works on the other. Previn’s earlier (RCA) recording of the overture to *The Wasps* has been out of the catalog for some time now; this remake is perhaps even more pointedly inspired, and it is far more welcome than the lovely but slighter *Green-sleeves* setting so often tacked on to the Tallis Fantasia. The latter piece, of course, is nothing less than one of this century’s genuine masterworks. Previn takes it very expansively, and its unique luminosity is fully realized in the sumptuous performance of the London Symphony strings. Only at one point, toward the beginning of the final section, is there a temporary halt in momentum that strikes me as something of a miscalculation. There are several other fine and possibly superior recordings of the two major works here, but these are more than satisfying, and the performance of the overture is downright stunning. *R.F.*

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN: The Yeomen of the Guard. Michael Rayner (baritone), Sir Richard Chomondeley; Geoffrey Shovelton (tenor), Colonel Fairfax; John Aylton (bass-baritone), Sergeant Meryll; Meston Reid (tenor), Leonard Meryll; John Reed (baritone), Jack Point; Kenneth Sanford (bass), Wilfred Shadbolt; others. D’Oyly Carte Opera Company; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royston Nash cond.

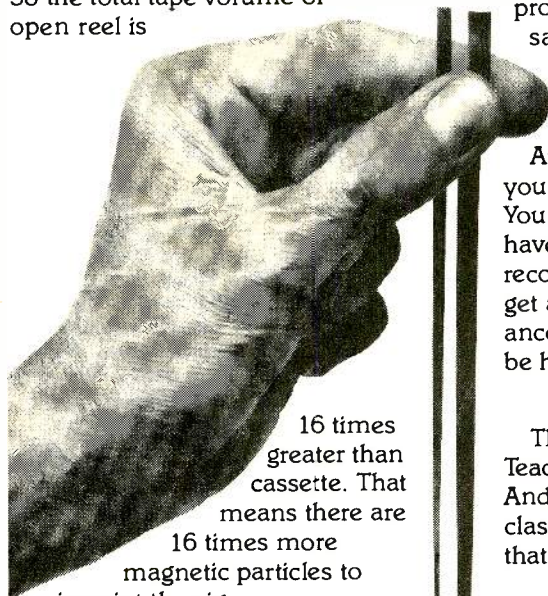
(Continued on page 88)

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SULLIVAN: *Ballet Suite No. 1: Victoria and Merrie England*. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royston Nash cond. LONDON OSA 12117 two discs \$19.96, © OSA5 12117 \$19.96.

Performance: **Spruce and snappy**
Recording: **Excellent**

The Yeomen of the Guard (or *The Merryman and His Maid*) was the tenth comic opera on which Gilbert and Sullivan collaborated, and not so comic at that; the story of Jack Point has its sad moments and an even sadder ending. But with its brilliant choral passages, wry ballads about the trials of a buffoon's life, and poignant and popular *I Have a Song to Sing, O!*, the work has been drawing laughter and tears from audiences since it opened at the Savoy in London in 1888.

There have been a number of fine recordings of the score, and one of the finest, with the D'Oyly Carte Company under Sir Malcolm Sargeant, is still available on London OSA 1258. In this new effort with Royston Nash at the helm, the Royal Philharmonic once again does splendid justice to Sullivan's ingenious orchestration, but Meston Reid is not quite as mellifluous as David Palmer in the role of Leonard, Barbara Lilley is only barely as winning as Elizabeth Harwood playing Elsie the "strolling singer," and Patricia Leonard merely approaches Gillian Knight as Dame Carruthers, the Tower of London's forbidding housekeeper. On the other hand, John Reed has definitely grown in the crucial part of Jack Point the jilted jester, the choral passages sound more magnificent than ever, and there are a few pleasant little surprises, such as the restoration of Sergeant Meryll's ditty *A Laughing Boy But Yesterday* and the inclusion of the lively dialogue leading up to *The Merryman and His Maid*, which frames the whole scene as it should.

By way of a bonus there's also a suite from Sullivan's ballet *Victoria and Merrie England*, presented at the queen's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. The dreary plot depicts "British life from the earliest times" (starting with the Druids!), but the music is as vivacious as can be, unmistakably Sullivan's, and it is stunningly played. The recorded sound reflects improvements in the art, though the cassette version does sound just a little bit duller than the discs—and comes without a libretto. *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GINASTERA: *String Quartet No. 1*. PROTO: *String Quartet No. 1*. Blair Quartet. QCA/RED MARK RM 3105 \$7.98 (from QCA Records, 2832 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45225).

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Very good**

Frank Proto is a bass player in the Cincinnati Symphony and an active jazz musician. His Quartet No. 1 is one of the neatest jazz/new-jazz crossover pieces I know. It isn't really a "Third Stream" piece at all but a thoroughly contemporary work imaginatively and skillfully flavored with the vernacular. The integration of elements is accomplished without apology or a trace of awkwardness. Even more remarkable, the *(Continued on page 90)*

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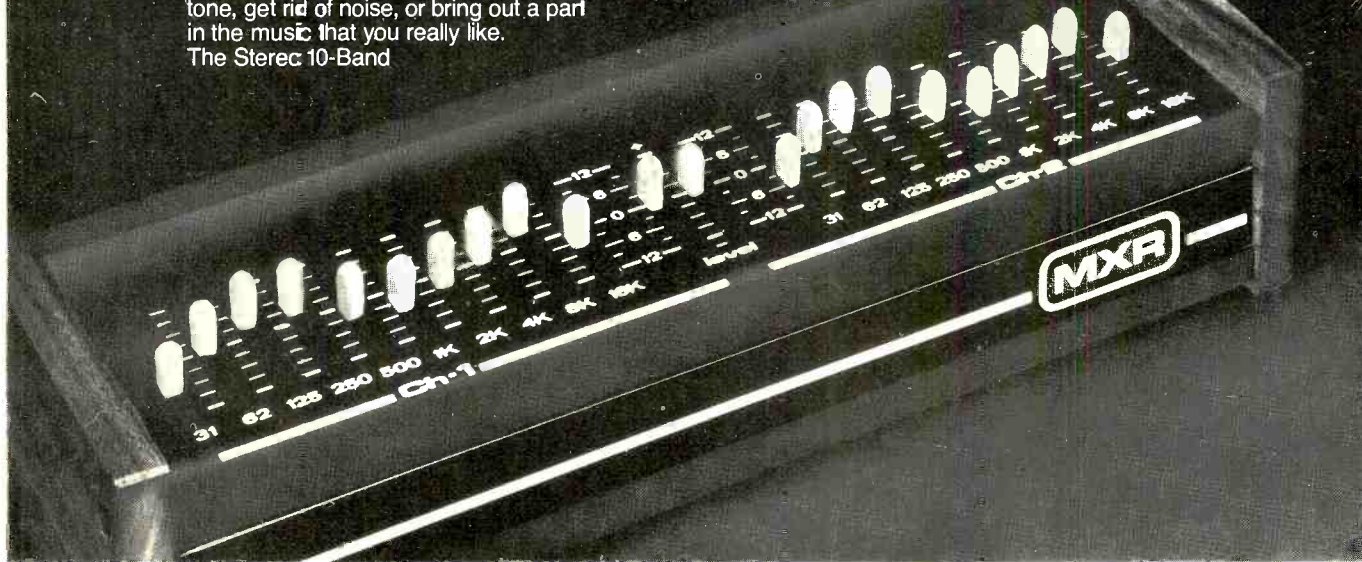
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Musica Reservata

MUSICA RESERVATA OF LONDON's new Vanguard release, "A Concert of Early Music," is a hodgepodge—but a wonderful hodgepodge. It is a collection of the greatest hits of the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries in England, Germany, Italy, France, and Burgundy, played by an early-music ensemble that has got to be just about the most exciting and versatile group of its kind around.

By now almost everybody knows that medieval and Renaissance music was, as often as not, jolly and boisterous and that crumhorns and viols can actually be played in tune. Even so, Olde Musick is generally taken to be an amusement for the culturati and performances of it are usually sicklied o'er with the pale cast of gentility. But Musica Reservata seems to have no reservations at all about bawling out a tune that *needs* bawling out. Not only are all the periods and styles of early European music represented on this disc; all the different social classes are represented as well. One piece is even played twice, first in a well-bred "in-door" manner and then as it might have been heard on the street or in the local alehouse. The transformation is astonishing and wonderful.

Musica Reservata's vocal and instrumental versatility is amazing, but nowhere more so than in the work of mezzo-soprano Jantina Noorman. She has so many different vocal styles at her command that it is hard to believe she is one person and not a whole cast of characters. Yet every one of her stylistic decisions is artistically convincing and carried out in a most impressive and expressive way. There is, in fact, a kind of music drama in these performances: each song is a re-creation not just of a text and music but of a very specific time and place. (Personal message to Ms. Noorman: ever do any music theater in your spare time?)

The other three singers—tenors John

Dudley and Edgar Fleet, bass David Thomas—are equally adept and have vocal and stylistic ranges nearly as wide as Noorman's. The large instrumental ensemble—including organ, sackbuts, rebecs, viols, crumhorns, trumpets, psaltery, lute, vielle, rauschpfeiff, harp, and percussion—also shows itself off to advantage. The credit for so excellently devising and realizing this early-music sampler belongs to the group's director, Michael Morrow. The record is an ideal introduction to this repertoire, but the special musical qualities of the performances (and the outstanding recorded sound) should commend it even to those already familiar with the riches of those early days.

"A Concert of Early Music" is the second sampler set that Musica Reservata has done for Vanguard (the first was an introduction to the instruments and instrumental music of the middle ages and Renaissance, VSD-71219/20). Let's hope they will get to work treating some of these periods and composers in depth. —Eric Salzman

MUSICA RESERVATA OF LONDON: A Concert of Early Music. Morton: *Il Sera pour Vous Conbatu/L'Ome Armé*. Dunstable: *O Rosa Bella*. Azzaiolo: *Chi Passa per Sta Strada*. Senfi: *Es Taget vor dem Walde*. Certon: *J'Ay le Rebours*. Dalza: *Tastar de Corde; Recercar*. Vaqueiras: *Kalenda Maya*. Sermisy: *Dont Vient Cela*. Othmayr: *Mir Ist ein Schönst Brauns Maidelein*. Frye: *Tout a par Moy*. Anon.: *Pavana la Bataille; L'Homme Armé; Galliard After Lavecha; Blame Not My Lute; Patrie Pacis; Amor Potest/Ad Amorem; Aime Sospiri; Hofanz und Hupfauff; Es Taget vor dem Walde; Belle Qui Tiens Ma Vie; Danse Royale; Me Lykyth Ever; Amors, Amors; Tant Apart; Saltarello*. Jantina Noorman (mezzo-soprano); Musica Reservata of London, Michael Morrow cond. VANGUARD VSD-71223 \$7.98.

use of the string-quartet medium—amplified a bit, it's true, by a few tasteful croons, shouts, and slaps required of the players—is completely convincing.

Ginastera's First Quartet, a similar work in many ways, is actually less striking and original than Proto's. Whereas Proto perfectly integrates European and American elements in a distinctive and original hybrid, Ginastera leans too heavily on his models, Stravinsky and Bartók. The work belongs to the composer's early "gaucho" period, but the Argentinian pampas often sound suspiciously like the plains of Hungary. In spite of all the energy expended, I don't feel the same degree of excitement or involvement from the players as in the Proto quartet. In other words, Ginastera is the "name" here, but it is for the Proto that you should by all means get this record (you may have to order it directly from the manufacturer, though the QCA label is listed in Schwann). E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

IRELAND: Concertino Pastorale. LENNOX BERKELEY: *Antiphon*. MICHAEL BERKELEY: *Meditations*. Westminster Cathedral String Orchestra, Colin Mawby cond. UNICORN UNS 260 \$10.98 (from Euroclass Records, 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013).

Performance: **Committed**

Recording: **Spacious**

John Ireland's *Concertino Pastorale*, one of his very finest works, was written in 1939, the same year as Tippett's Concerto for Double String Orchestra and Lennox Berkeley's Serenade for Strings, and is another outstanding example of the twentieth-century renaissance of English string music that deserves wider circulation here. By no means the lighthearted little piece its title might suggest, it has a rather solemn opening section (though the bulk of the first movement, "Eclogue," is in a more lyrical vein), a deepfelt threnody for its second movement, and a vigorous but not at all playful toccata for finale. Sir Adrian Boult gave us a splendid performance with the London Philharmonic in a Lyrita collection of Ireland's works once available from the Musical Heritage Society (MHS 1498); Colin Mawby's name is as little known here as Boult's is familiar, but he has every bit as thorough a grasp of the concertino and a fine group of players to carry out his wishes with skill and commitment.

Both of the Berkeley works presented here in their respective disc premières were composed in the decade now ending—Sir Lennox's *Antiphon* in 1973, his son Michael's *Meditations* two years later (especially for Mawby's orchestra, which introduced the piece in 1977). Both reflect the influence of plainsong—the latter in a general way with traces of Gregorian patterns, the former in the second and longer of its two movements, which is actually a set of five variations on a plainchant theme. Both are thoroughly idiomatic in their handling of the string body and profound in content. *Meditations* is a thrusting, powerful, somewhat disturbing essay that fills a quarter-hour with the sort of intensity that leaves the listener stimulated rather than ex-

(Continued on page 92)

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hausted. *Antiphon* is more varied in this respect, its variations providing contrasts of rhythm, timbre, and overall mood. Both works are happy discoveries, especially as they are performed with the same degree of commitment as the Ireland; Unicorn's spacious sound enhances the performances, and the Dutch pressing is flawless. R.F.

JOACHIM: *Hebrew Melodies, Op. 9, Nos. 1 and 3* (see RUBINSTEIN)

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, in C-sharp Minor.* Ignaz Friedman (piano). *No. 6, in D-flat Major.* Mischa Levitzki (piano). *No. 11, in A Minor.* Alfred Cortot (piano). *No. 12, in C-sharp Minor* (ed. Saint-

Saëns). Gina Bachauer (piano). *No. 13, in A Minor.* Ferruccio Busoni (piano). *No. 14, in F Minor.* Mark Hambourg (piano). *No. 15, in A Minor ("Rakóczy March").* Solomon (piano). ARABESQUE © AR 8011 \$6.98.

Performance: **Fascinating**
Recording: **Surprisingly good**

This sort of thing has been done before, but not often, and it is intriguing to hear such keyboard giants go at this material serially. The chronology is a bit different from what some of the names might suggest: the latest item here is the Cortot, taped in May 1953; the Bachauer preceded it in June 1949, and all the others are of much earlier vintage, from the years 1922-1932, not only

pre-tape but in one case pre-electrical. The earliest, of course, is the performance by Busoni, taken down originally at 80 rpm. As Alan Rich points out in his excellent annotation, most of Busoni's recording was done on piano rolls; there is probably even more freedom in this performance than could have been fully captured in that medium, and the sound is remarkably lifelike for a pre-electrical recording. Friedman's *brío* in the most famous of these pieces is also exceptionally well conveyed in the 1931 recording, though it's a little wavery here and there (and rich in surface crackle, which may add nostalgia value). Levitzki, in another of the celebrated rhapsodies, is more dramatic, freer with rhythms, and shows a wider range of dynamics—but he indulges in no breakneck careering with the famous *friss*, which is taken at a relatively deliberate pace, cleanly articulated, and exciting in the way Beecham made the Gypsy Dance from *Carmen* exciting. Mark Hambourg (who looks like Max Reger in the collection of photos inserted with the disc) will be remembered for what may have been the very first recording of the Tchaikovsky B-flat Minor Concerto. Rich points out that he was noted for both his "burning spirit" and his "prodigious inaccuracy at the keyboard," neither of which qualities seems especially present in this fluent 1929 performance of the piece better known in its extended forms as the Hungarian Fantasia for piano and orchestra and the Rhapsody No. 1 for orchestra. The great Solomon, recorded at the age of thirty at the end of 1932, is the only member of this group of seven still living, though he has been inactive for twenty-four years now. At thirty, as at the end of his tragically foreshortened career, he was Lisztian in the grandest sense, generating excitement without abandoning his innate elegance.

Though the sound happily belies the recordings' age through much of this collection, the labeling is less than wholly satisfactory. Levitzki's name is consistently misspelled, Cortot's is left off the label altogether, and Solomon is listed thereon as "Cutner Solomon." Still, there could hardly be a more apt platform for these diverse talents than the Liszt rhapsodies, and piano aficionados will find this record indispensable.

R.F.

LITOLFF: *Concerto Symphonique No. 4: Scherzo* (see DOHNÁNYI)

MAYUZUMI: *Nirvana Symphony; Mandala Symphony.* Japan Chorus Union; NHK Symphony Orchestra, Yuzo Toyama cond. (in *Nirvana*), Kazuo Yamada cond. (in *Mandala*). PHILIPS 9500 762 \$9.98, © 7300 841 \$9.98.

Performance: **Authentic**
Recording: **Good**

Toshiro Mayuzumi's *Nirvana Symphony* was the work of his twenty-ninth year, the *Mandala Symphony* of his thirty-first. Both reflect his studies in Paris and Darmstadt in the Fifties; elements of *Punktmusik* and of well-assimilated Messaien are quite evident. But to these are added, though not altogether successfully amalgamated, elements of Buddhist temple chant, Japanese temple bells, and related percussion sonori-

(Continued on page 94)

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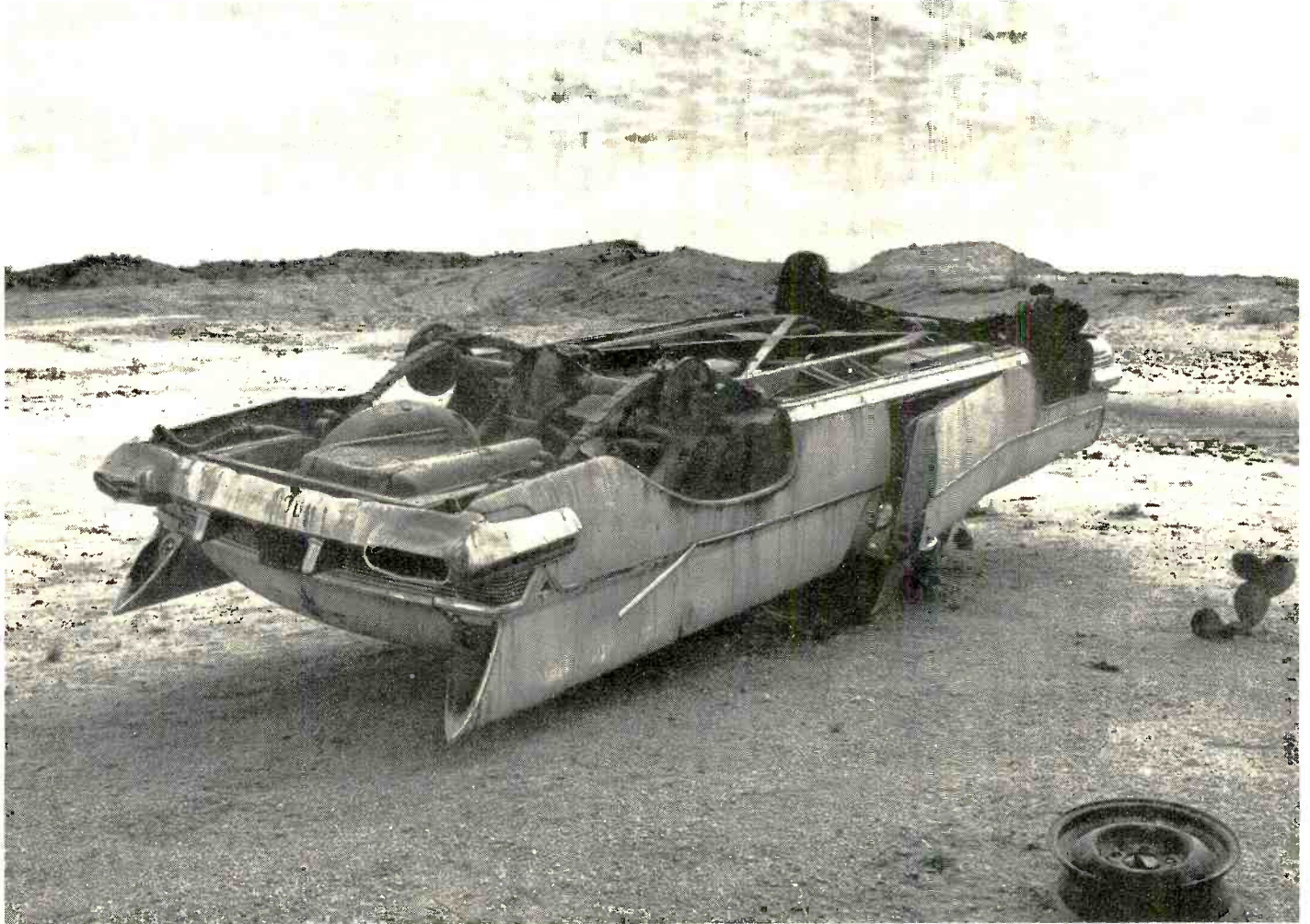
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Conductor Morton Gould

Three Sonic "10s"

THREE digitally mastered recordings conducted by Morton Gould that made extremely favorable impressions on the STEREO REVIEW critics who reviewed them and on me when I prepared our January 1980 roundup, "A Dozen Digital Demo Discs," have now been issued in dbx-encoded form. This format removes the last restrictions on dynamic range resulting from analog-disc technology (see "Audio/Video News," April 1980). To me, the most impressive advantage conferred by the dbx processing is the complete quiet from which the music emerges, a silence marred only by such musician-generated noises as page turning. At the other end of the dynamic scale, the loud passages get very loud, and yet there is none of the sense of strain common in highly modulated non-dbx-encoded recordings. These discs—which must, of course, be played through a dbx disc decoder—provide excellent tests of a hi-fi system's ability to handle the kind of wide dynamic ranges that will be possible with the forthcoming all-digital playback systems, and they furnish a foretaste of what the all-digital disc will sound like. On all three discs, one from Chalfont and two from Varèse Sarabande masters, the recording quality per se suggests conservative multimiking, with the primary sound picked up by several omnidirectional microphones and most of the other mikes providing sonic accentuation.

Musically, I find the disc on which Gould authoritatively conducts his own works the most successful. Least successful is the "Digital Space" movie-music album, if only because of its bits-and-pieces programming.

ties on a vast scale. The chant element is most significant in *Nirvana*, with solemn chanting by a twelve-part male chorus contrasting with incantatory episodes for two soloists. (I regret that no transliterated and translated texts were included.) The *Mandala* Symphony is briefer, but also more overtly eventful. The chorus is heard only in the very last bars, preceded by an extraordinarily impressive processional episode.

Certainly anyone interested in the East-West fusion that has been going on in art

The third disc has some slapdash orchestral playing, and the performance of Ravel's *Boléro*, despite the excellent sonics through to the climax, still, to my ears, falls flat. I'd give this one an "8" for its music, but all three records rate "10" for sonics.

—David Ranada

GOULD: *Latin-American Symphonette; Fall River Legend, Cotillion; Festive Music; Philharmonic Waltzes; Symphony on Marching Tunes, Quickstep.* London Symphony Orchestra, Morton Gould cond. VARÈSE SARABANDE/DBX ● VCDM 1000.10/PS-1009 \$16 (from dbx dealers and at selected record stores).

DIGITAL SPACE—SPECTACULAR MUSIC FOR FILMS. Gould: *Windjammer.* Williams: *Star Wars.* Newman: *Airport.* Copland: *The Red Pony: Morning on the Ranch.* Bliss: *Things to Come, Epilogue.* Rózsa: *Tribute to a Badman, Suite, That Hamilton Woman, Love Theme.* Moross: *The Big Country.* Vaughan Williams: *The 49th Parallel, Prelude.* Walton: *Spitfire, Prelude and Fugue.* London Symphony Orchestra, Morton Gould cond. VARÈSE SARABANDE/DBX ● VCDM 1000.20/PS-1008 \$16 (from dbx dealers and at selected record stores).

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Festive Overture, Op. 96.* RAVEL: *Boléro.* GINASTERA: *Estanicia Suite.* WEINBERGER: *Polka and Fugue from Schwanda.* London Symphony Orchestra, Morton Gould cond. CHALFONT/DBX ● SDG 301/PS-1019 \$16 (from dbx dealers and at selected record stores).

music over the past generation through the work of such composers as John Cage, Lou Harrison, Harry Partch, and Alan Hovhaness will find things to respond to in this music, and the panoply of sounds the recording engineers have captured here will appeal to audiophiles.

D.H.

MENDELSSOHN: *Symphony No. 5, in D Minor, Op. 107 ("Reformation").* SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 1, in B-flat Major, Op. 38 ("Spring").* Philharmonia Orchestra,

Riccardo Muti cond. ANGEL □ SZ-37601 \$8.98.

Performance: **Heroic**

Recording: **Full-bodied, spacious**

MENDELSSOHN: *Symphony No. 5, in D Minor, Op. 107 ("Reformation"); Hebrides Overture, Op. 26.* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Haitink cond. PHILIPS 9500 713 \$9.98, © 7300 804 \$9.98.

Performance: **Poised**

Recording: **Excellent**

Riccardo Muti and Bernard Haitink here espouse sharply contrasting views of the *Reformation* Symphony: whereas classic poise and a light hand are the dominant characteristics of Haitink's treatment, Muti transforms the music into a grand-scale heroic statement. The latter's first movement is fierce and weighty, and, though the charming scherzo provides a lighter interlude, the usually intermezzo-like slow movement becomes passionately expressive, leading into an *Ein' Feste Burg* finale that is quite the most imposing account of this music that has come my way. I'm not sure that the symphony, from Mendelssohn's twentieth year, was meant for this kind of reading, but Muti does make a convincing case, and he has the Philharmonia players with him every bar of the way.

Haitink's reading of the work, as a whole, lacks the distinctive character of either Muti's or the lighter-handed Christoph von Dohnányi interpretation on London. The always welcome *Hebrides* Overture comes off nicely under Haitink's baton, but without achieving the windswept quality of Herbert von Karajan's Deutsche Grammophon reading. The Philips sound is beautifully transparent in texture and warm in body.

The opening movement of the Schumann *Spring* Symphony in Muti's hands leads one to expect a supercharged reading along the lines of the Mendelssohn *Reformation*, for it is all youth and impetuosity. However, with a warmly phrased and beautifully controlled playing of the slow movement and a deliberate but virile scherzo, the interpretive tension eases, and we wind up with a delightfully easy and fluent finale. Muti observes repeats in both the first and last movements to good effect.

The sound on the Angel disc is not quite as transparent as on the Philips, but detail and overall orchestral presence are first-rate, and any coarseness in the biggest climaxes seems alleviated to a significant extent by four-channel playback.

D.H.

MOSZKOWSKI: *Suite in G Major for Two Violins and Piano, Op. 71.* SHOSTAKOVICH: *Three Duets for Two Violins and Piano.* PROKOFIEV: *Sonata in C Major for Two Violins, Op. 56.* Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman (violins); Samuel Sanders (piano). ANGEL SZ-37668 \$8.98.

Performance: **Elegant, vital**

Recording: **Good**

This album is a curious hodgepodge, though it is interesting to discover Moritz Moszkowski as a composer of works beyond the salon-trifle/pop-concert category. If his four-movement suite is no world-shaking masterpiece, it is agreeable fare in a Schumann-Brahms vein. The Shostakovich duets

(Continued on page 96)



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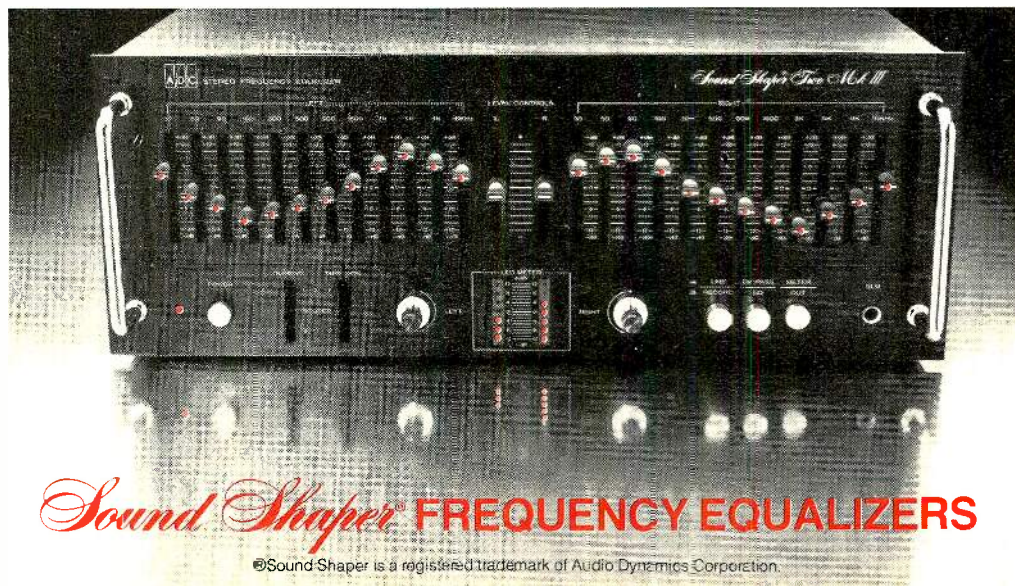
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are salon pieces redolent of an earlier age, arranged from his incidental theater and ballet scores. The Prokofiev sonata is the one piece of genuine substance here, a tough-fibered work from his late Paris days.

All the performances here are characterized by elegance, skill, and the special element of vitality common to the music making of Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman. The pianism of Samuel Sanders is a major element in the collaboration, especially in the Moszkowski. *D.H.*

MOZART: Flute Concerto No. 1, in G Major (K. 313); Flute Concerto No. 2, in D Major (K. 314); Andante in C Major (K. 315). András Adorján (flute); Munich Chamber Orchestra, Hans Stadlmair cond. DENON OX-7180-ND \$15.

MOZART: Concerto in C Major for Flute, Harp, and Orchestra (K. 299); Rondo in D Major for Flute and Orchestra (K. Anh. 184). MOZART (arr. Adorján); **Concertone in C Major for Flute, Violin, Oboe, Cello, and Orchestra (K. 190).** András Adorján (flute); Susanna Mildonian (harp); Jean-Jacques Kantorow (violin); Diethelm Jonas (oboe); Emmerich Bünemann (cello); Munich Chamber Orchestra, Hans Stadlmair cond. DENON OX-7181-ND \$15.

Performance **Mellifluous**
Recording **Transparent**

Denon jackets now have a new look, these two with unusually handsome and tasteful full-color pictures in place of the old black-

framed affairs, and they now boast annotative inserts "in English, German and French" as well as Japanese. The note on the K. Anh. 184 rondo offers a "personal guess that Mozart did not arrange this rondo himself," but there is no need to guess: Mozart wrote it in C Major for violin and orchestra (K. 373), and it was arranged for flute by his fellow composer and eventual publisher Franz Anton Hoffmeister, who was a flutist himself. There is thus a good precedent for András Adorján's own adaptation of the *Concertone* in C Major, originally for two violins but no less attractive in the form it is presented in here.

Adorján is a thirty-six-year-old Hungarian who grew up in Denmark, studied dentistry before committing himself to the flute, numbers both Jean-Pierre Rampal and Aurèle Nicolet among his teachers, and six years ago succeeded Kurt Redel as principal flutist of the Bavarian Radio Orchestra. He has made a record or two before for Denon in Japan, and with these two he has recorded all of Mozart's concerted works for his instrument—plus, as already noted, a sizable addition. Rampal or James Galway may show a little more individuality here and there in these works, but these are all most agreeably stylish and mellifluous performances. Adorján's fellow soloists on the second disc—harpist Susanna Mildonian and violinist Jean-Jacques Kantorow—are both well known, and Kantorow is an especially admirable Mozart player. The soloists and the orchestra under Hans Stadlmair function very smoothly together,

with hardly a trace of the squareness noted in some of this conductor's earlier recordings. The one reservation I have concerns the rather disappointing showing made by the horns in the finale of K. 299, but that is a single small point in an otherwise splendid presentation, and the sound, as one expects by now from Denon, is transparency itself. There are other recordings of these works offering performances as good as or even a little better than these, but none that *sound* as lovely. The cadenzas in K. 299 are by the distinguished Dutch musician Marius Flothuis, all the others by Adorján himself.

R.F.

MOZART: Piano Concertos Nos. 8 and 22 (see Best of the Month, page 75)

MOZART: The Magic Flute (see Best of the Month, page 70)

MOZART: Mass in C Minor (K. 427). Margaret Marshall, Felicity Palmer (sopranos); Anthony Rolfe Johnson (tenor); Gwynne Howell (bass); Academy and Chorus of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 9500 680 \$9.98, © 7300 775 \$9.98.

Performance: **Alert and imaginative**
Recording **Crystalline**

This is a handsome and enjoyable account of Mozart's penultimate setting of the Mass, which, like its sole successor, the Requiem in D Minor, was left unfinished.

(Continued on page 98)

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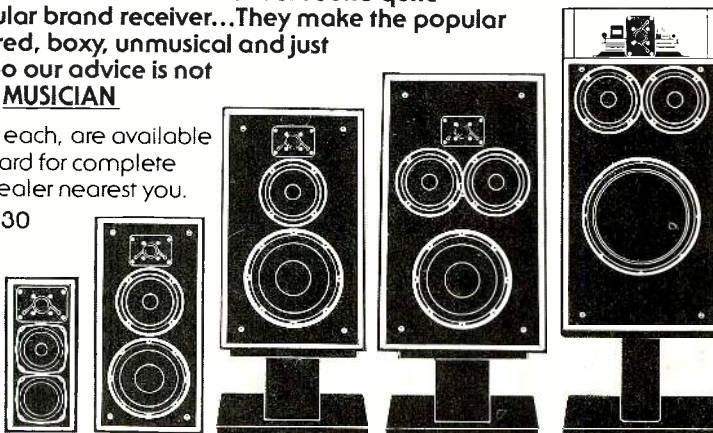
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Neville Marriner's characteristic crispness and clarity serve this work well. The pace never drags, and the joyously perky handling of the concertante wind passage opening the Credo is only one example of the alert and imaginative playing throughout. Philips' crystalline recording is quite a plus too. Marriner uses H. C. Robbins Landon's by now standard edition, as Colin Davis did in his earlier recording of the work on the same label (6500 235). In place of Marriner's fluidity and lightness of texture, Davis offers a somewhat broader and weightier interpretation, a consciously more solemn one. His sonics are less impressive, but the choral and solo singing is on a slightly higher level, and in the portentous opening pages he makes a bit more of the orchestral winds, with less prominent organ sound, than Marriner does. Perhaps the most impressive of all current recordings of the C Minor Mass, though, and at only half the Philips price, is the one conducted by Raymond Leppard on Seraphim S-60257. The male soloists, who have little to do in any case, are about equally fine in all three of these recordings, but Leppard has the most appealing female soloists in Ileana Cotrubas and Kiri Te Kanawa. His approach, neither as fleet as Marriner's nor as broadly "symphonic" as Davis', strikes a fairly convincing balance between the display and devotional elements of the work. *R.F.*

MOZART: *Rondo in A Minor, K. 511; Rondo in D Major, K. 485* (see **BEETHOVEN**)

PROKOFIEV: *Sonata in C Major for Two Violins, Op. 56* (see **MOSKOWSKI**)

PROTO: *String Quartet No. 1* (see **GINASTERA**)

PUCCHINI: *La Bohème*. Renata Scotto (soprano), Mimi; Alfredo Kraus (tenor), Rodolfo; Sherrill Milnes (baritone), Marcello; Carol Neblett (soprano), Musetta; Matteo Manuguerra (baritone), Schaunard; Paul Plishka (bass), Colline; Renato Capecchi (bass), Alcindoro; Italo Tajo (bass), Benoit; others. Trinity Boys Choir; Ambrosian Opera Chorus; National Philharmonic Orchestra, James Levine cond. ANGEL SZBX-3900 two discs \$18.96, © 4Z2X-3900 \$18.96.

Performance: **Imperfect**
Recording: **Excellent**

There are some praiseworthy things in Angel's new *La Bohème*, cast with Metropolitan Opera regulars, but shortcomings in the singing make an all-out recommendation impossible. James Levine's conducting is the new set's greatest asset. Aside from his indulging Renata Scotto with tempos that are too expansive (there are moments when the conductor seems to accompany the singers instead of leading them), this is an enthusiastic and committed account of the music. Brisk and energetic when he should be, Levine makes his orchestra sing and weaves a lush tapestry around the vocalists. Unfortunately, only the two baritones rise to Levine's challenge. Sherrill Milnes gives

us a dynamic Marcello of seasoned artistry; some of his loud high notes are not on dead center, but his subtly controlled, velvety *mezza-voce* offers compensation. A special treat is Matteo Manuguerra as the amiable Schaunard, a role that is hardly ever interpreted by a singer of his quality; in the few moments allotted to him he sounds as important as the principals.

Alfredo Kraus cannot be faulted on musical grounds, and, as always, he is an artist of sensitivity and vocal refinement. His singing is rewarding in such moments as the tender exchange toward the end of Act III, but Rodolfo is not one of his stage roles, by his own choice, and the soundness of that judgment is borne out by this recording—his sound is lean, unsensuous, and unsuited for Puccini. Renata Scotto, on the other hand, is appropriately cast as Mimi, but, alas, she is in distressing form here. All the intelligence, insight, and sense of detail she brings to the role cannot compensate for her precariously intoned, unsteady, and effortful singing.

Carol Neblett's diction is unclear, but she creates an acceptable Musetta, and Paul Plishka is a good if unmemorable Colline. As Benoit, Italo Tajo manages his threadbare voice with singular skill. The choruses are good, and the sound is clear, rich, and generally well balanced. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RACHMANINOFF: *Symphonic Dances, Op. 45; Russian Rhapsody*. Vladimir Ash-

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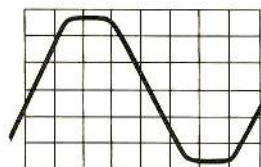
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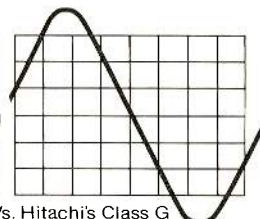
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ANDRÉ PREVIN, VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY: *persuasive Rachmaninoff*

three days in January 1891, nine weeks before his eighteenth birthday. This is not a sequence of folk tunes, as one might infer from the title, but a set of variations on a theme that may or may not be of such derivation—in any event it's a catchy one. I can imagine how well *this* piece might sound in orchestral garb—an oboe, clarinet, horn, cymbals, and, above all, luscious strings are easily suggested by the two pianos. An excellent pair of performances, realistically recorded, and provided with informative annotation by Tim McDonald.

R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RUBINSTEIN: *Sonata in F Minor for Viola and Piano, Op. 49.* JOACHIM: *Hebrew Melodies, Op. 9, Nos. 1 and 3.* Lubomír Malý (viola); Libuše Křepelová (piano). SUPRAPHON 1111 2475 \$8.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Warm and well balanced**

Here are two attractive and (today) virtually unknown works by two of the giant musicians of the Romantic era. Anton Rubinstein and Joseph Joachim were not only celebrated virtuoso performers on the piano and violin, respectively, they were composers, conductors, and renowned pedagogues as well. Rubinstein founding the St. Petersburg Conservatory at the age of thirty-two, Joachim appointed to a conservatory direc-

kenazy, André Previn (pianos). LONDON CS 7159 \$9.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Realistic**

André Previn is the only musician to have recorded both versions of Rachmaninoff's valedictory *Symphonic Dances*; having made a fine record of the orchestral version as conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra (Angel S-37158), he must believe strongly in the validity of the two-piano version to follow up with this. Many who enjoy and admire the *Symphonic Dances* in their

orchestral setting overlook or actually avoid the two-piano edition, assuming it is nothing more than an outline or study for the orchestral version or a reduction of it. Not at all: this is as strong a piece in its own right as the piano works of Ravel that he transformed into orchestral masterworks, and I cannot imagine its being more persuasively realized than it is here by these two veteran—and frequently collaborating—Rachmaninoff interpreters.

The *Russian Rhapsody* is one of those very early works just being added to the Rachmaninoff canon; it was composed in

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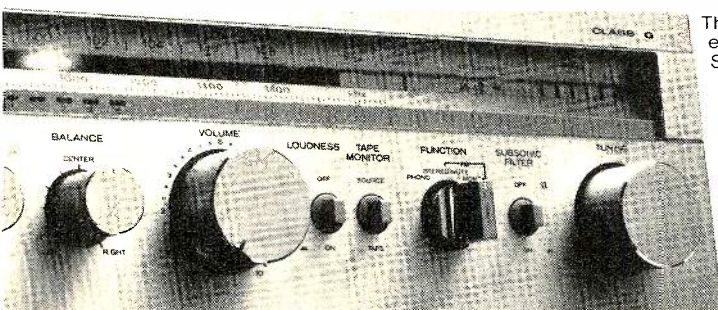
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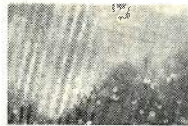
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torship in Berlin in the same decade. Both were among the several musicians of their generation who benefited from contact with Liszt, and both stood godfather to important works by better-known composers. The anonymous annotation here points out a contrast between Rubinstein's more extroverted nature and Joachim's more introverted one, and the two works on the disc might have been chosen to support that observation. Rubinstein's big, outgoing sonata is quite a different sort of piece from Joachim's melancholy *Hebrew Melodies*, which were inspired by his reading of Lord Byron's poems based on Jewish history (the omitted No. 2 of the set of three is a funeral march).

Both works make an agreeable impression, but it is the playing of the two Czech musicians that affords the deeper pleasure. Lubomír Malý has a gorgeous, warm, "real viola" sound, and Libuše Křepelová is a first-rate partner. (Her assignment in the Rubinstein sonata is by no means mere accompaniment; parts of that work are clearly the reverse in terms of the relative prominence of the two instruments.) Supraphon's sonic focus is close up but very warm and well balanced, and the pressing is quite clean. *R.F.*

SAMUEL: *What of My Music!* (see BRANT)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUBERT: *Piano Sonata in C Major (D. 840, "Relique"); Three Klavierstücke (D. 946)*. Gilbert Kalish (piano). NONESUCH H-71386 \$5.98.

Performance: **Splendid**
Recording: **Excellent**

All the music here is prime mature Schubert. The C Major Sonata dates from 1825, the *Klavierstücke* from the spring of Schubert's last year. Only the first two movements of the sonata were completed, with a menuetto and rondo set down in fragmentary form. There have been previous recordings of both the two-movement version—which is what we get here—and of the work as completed by others (Sviatoslav Richter's of a "complete" version is still available on Monitor). I find the two movements wholly satisfactory on their own; they form a musical statement of such eloquence, pathos, and underlying strength and structural integrity that anything more would be superfluous. Similarly, the three *Klavierstücke*, though possibly planned as part of a third set of impromptus, seem quite sufficient by themselves.

In each of the five movements on this disc, one senses the same elements of sticism, pathos, and desolation familiar from the last songs of *Die Schöne Müllerin* and the whole of *Die Winterreise*. Gaiety breaks through only in the last of the *Klavierstücke*—and with a decidedly Hungarian-gypsy tinge. In fact, the density of musical substance and its ramifying development becomes a bit overwhelming in the sonata; I feel closer to the essential Schubert in the less formal but superbly formed *Klavierstücke*. Gilbert Kalish's performances fully match the eloquence of the music, and the disc has the benefit of superb recording of a fine modern Baldwin piano. *D.H.*

SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 1, in B-flat Major, Op. 38* (see MENDELSSOHN)

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Three Duets for Two Violins and Piano* (see MOSKOWSKI)

SIBELIUS: *Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 47; Humoresques, Opp. 87 and 89*. Salvatore Accardo (violin); London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 9500 675 \$9.98, © 7300 770 \$9.98.

Performance: **Brahmsian**
Recording: **Very good**

Salvatore Accardo plays very brilliantly here, with a big, lustrous tone, and in Colin Davis he has a companion of established Sibelian credentials. Their somewhat Brahmsian approach, however, tends to minimize the fantasy element that has always seemed so much a part of the concerto. The first movement is taken a little more broadly than usual, the second so extremely slowly that its momentum all but disappears; only the finale, rich in both dignity and drama, is fully convincing in this respect.

The delicious but unaccountably neglected *Humoresques* (two in Op. 87, four in Op. 89) make so obviously appropriate a filler for the concerto that it is surprising this is the first time such a coupling has been offered (David Oistrakh included the Op. 87 pair alone with his last recording of the concerto, formerly on Melodiya/Angel, now on Musical Heritage Society 3546). While a single movement may not be enough to save the concerto performance, a single piece may be enough to spoil the *Humoresque* cycle. The one piece that has always struck me as the most ingratiating of the six—Op. 89, No. 3—is the one real disappointment here. Accardo and Davis take it very deliberately and give it a quasi-elegiac character, whereas Aaron Rosand, in his pioneering recording with Tibor Szöke and the Southwest German Radio Orchestra (Turnabout TV-S 34182), projects a beguiling heartiness that suits the piece down to the ground. He is, in fact, more than a match for Accardo in all six *Humoresques*. Philips has provided very good sound, with the violin perhaps just a little more forward than ideal, and excellent annotation by Jack Diether. *R.F.*

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op. 43*. BBC Symphony Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham cond. ARABESQUE © 8023 \$6.98.

Performance: **Beecham in full cry**
Recording: **1954 live concert**

Sibelius fanciers and Beecham buffs alike will be thoroughly familiar with this taping of Sir Thomas' ebullient reading of the most popular of the Sibelius symphonies from the 1962 EMI import issue (ALP 1947), and some may have heard the 1979 World Records issue of it as part of the Beecham Retrospective Series in celebration of the conductor's centennial. Still, the Arabesque release marks the first *general* U.S. availability of this justly famous reading.

The excitement of the actual performance from the Royal Festival Hall certainly comes through, especially with Sir Thomas' mighty shout just before a crucial developmental episode in the first movement. The

sound is somewhat on the coarse side, but it in no way detracts from the musical communication or sense of occasion conveyed here. Of the three LP issues, I find the original EMI one to have the most warm and natural balance, with the rather closely cut World Records issue sounding a mite thin in comparison. The Arabesque version is quite close to the sound of the EMI disc. Let us hope that this release is only the first in a "best of Beecham" series to include the Sibelius Sixth Symphony and, for a coupling, the extensive excerpts from the incidental music for Shakespeare's *The Tempest* that Beecham recorded for Philips in 1955.

D.H.



Christian Steiner

JEANETTE SCOVOTTI
A lively Strauss fishermaid

SOLER: Six Concertos for Two Keyboard Instruments. Kenneth Gilbert, Trevor Pinnock (harpichords, fortepianos). ARCHIV 2533 445 \$9.98.

Performance: **Precise**
Recording: **Fine**

The idea of using two keyboards may be intriguing, but Antonio Soler certainly wrote some threadbare music for them. Perhaps these concertos were enough to amuse the infante of Spain during dull evenings at the palace, but they cannot hold the attention of the sophisticated listener today. There are, admittedly, some passages of merit, but they are few and far between, and the endless variations on formula minuets seem to go on forever.

Four of the concertos here are performed on two harpsichords and two on two fortepianos. Although Kenneth Gilbert and Trevor Pinnock are more at home on the former, they play austere and eschew any variety that might be achieved through registration changes. Whichever instruments they are playing, their approach is devoid of the sparkle and wit so necessary to this naive music. I wonder why they did not try some of the concertos with one harpsichord and one fortepiano rather than always matching instruments. Such a combination was used during the late eighteenth century, and Soler's keyboard idiom is apt for both instruments. The contrast would at least give the music some tonal variety.

S.L.

JOHANN STRAUSS II: A Night in Venice. Carlo Bini (tenor), Duke of Urbino; Karl Dönch (baritone), Senator Delacqua; Elisabeth Steiner (mezzo-soprano), Barbara; Jeanette Scovotti (soprano), Annina; Wolfgang Brendel (baritone), Caramello; Frieder Stricker (tenor), Pappacoda; Elke Schary (soprano), Ciboletta. Choir of the Hungarian Radio and Television; Hungarian State Orchestra, Ernst Märzendorfer cond. CBS M2 35908 two discs \$17.96.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Good**

In recent years we have witnessed many scholarly efforts to free musical works of the often well-intentioned tamperings of editors and arrangers and reveal them as their composers originally conceived them. I never suspected, though, that Johann Strauss' *A Night in Venice* would be the subject of such restudy. In its original form this operetta was a resounding failure in 1883, and it managed to hold the stage thereafter only through the efforts of a long list of arrangers, including Erich Korngold and Walter Felsenstein.

This performance, first released in Europe in 1976 by BASF, claims to be the "first recording of the original version," but that is not quite the case. Producer Hans-Ulrich Barth comes down quite hard on Korngold & Co. for taking liberties with Strauss' score, but even he admits that the weaknesses of the original book make some changes necessary. Sensibly, his version does not use the howlingly inept original lyrics of *Lagoon Waltz*, accepting instead the sophisticated verses familiar from previous recordings. Moreover, *Nur für Natur* (which here becomes *Nur für l'Amour*), the hit tune from an earlier Strauss operetta, has been interpolated. It happens to be one of the Waltz King's best inspirations, and I would welcome it under any circumstances, but this makes it even more obvious that the present edition cannot make a strong claim for "authenticity." That issue aside, *A Night in Venice* is simply not in the same league dramatically as, say, *Die Fledermaus* or *The Gypsy Baron*. The score, however, is delightful, teeming with treasureable melodies.

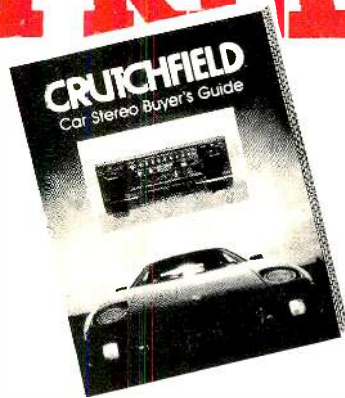
It is surprising that a Hungarian orchestra and chorus were engaged for this recording, with a cast of various nationalities, but conductor Ernst Märzendorfer is obviously a devoted Strauss interpreter. The performance is well-paced and idiomatic, though the choral pronunciation could be more distinct. The singing is generally good without being spectacular. Jeanette Scovotti is the vocal standout in the lively role of Annina, the fishermaid. Carlo Bini's secure but hard-edged tenor holds up well, but listeners who know Erich Kunz's or Nicolai Gedda's performances of the show-stopping numbers will not be satisfied. There are a few balance inconsistencies, but, in the main, this is an enjoyable performance of an operetta heretofore available only from import sources. Don't expect a German-English libretto, though; there isn't one.

G.J.

R. STRAUSS: Bursleske in D Minor for Piano and Orchestra (see DOHNÁNYI)

(Continued overleaf)

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SULLIVAN: *Ballet Suite No. 1* (see GILBERT AND SULLIVAN)

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TAKEMITSU: *Quatrain II*. Tashi. ***Waterways*.** Barbara Allen, Nancy Allen (harps); David Frost, Richard Fitz (vibraphones); Tashi. ***Waves*.** Robert Rouch (horn); Ronald Borrer, Richard Chamberlain (trombones); David Frost (bass drum); Tashi. RCA ARL1-3483 \$8.98, © ARK1-3483 \$8.98.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Excellent**

Toru Takemitsu's music is an extraordinary illustration of East-West cross-fertilization. The Japanese composer's basic training and style are European. But his music reflects the post-expressionist Europe of such composers as Messiaen and Boulez—whose music mingles twelve-tone expressionism with elements from the East, whether secondhand via Debussy or firsthand via Indian, Javanese, or Japanese music! Takemitsu's meditative, sonorous East-West mix is, of course, just right for Tashi, an ensemble of four young Western musicians—Pe-

ter Serkin, piano; Richard Stoltzman, clarinet; Ida Kavafian, violin; Fred Sherry, cello—whose collective identity is distinctly Eastern influenced.

Each of the works here was written for Tashi or one of its members. *Quatrain II*, the earliest and most traditional of the three, is a chamber version of a 1975 work created for Tashi plus orchestra. *Waves*, written in 1976, is co-dedicated to Stoltzman, and *Water Ways*, completed in 1978, is dedicated to Peter Serkin, Tashi's nominal leader. The last work, scored for Tashi plus harps and vibraphones, is the most intriguing and, in many ways, the most successful of the three. But Takemitsu's music generally, and especially the two "water pieces" here, is both original and appealing. The recording is superb. *E.S.*

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Enchantress*. Rimma Glushkova (soprano), Kuma; Oleg Klenov (baritone), Prince Nikita; Liudmilla Simonova (mezzo-soprano), Princess; Lev Kuznetsov (tenor), Prince Yury; Boris Dobrin (bass), Zhuran; Evgeny Vladimirov (bass), Mamirov; Andrei Sokolov (tenor), Pais; Vladimir Matorin (baritone), Kichiga; others. Moscow Radio Symphony Or-

chestra and Chorus, Gennady Provatorov cond. CBS M4X 35182 four discs \$38.98.

Performance: **Raw but spirited**
Recording: **Acceptable**

The Enchantress, Tchaikovsky's eighth opera, was not too successful when introduced in 1887 (between the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies), and it has not really become a repertoire item even in Russian theaters, though apparently it has not been entirely shelved either. Such ambivalence is not surprising for the opera has both obvious strengths and equally obvious weaknesses. In 1887 Tchaikovsky was a complete master of orchestral writing, and his previous operas (*Eugene Onegin* included) testify to his skill in handling voices as well. In *The Enchantress*, however, his musical inspiration only occasionally reached truly impressive heights. Moreover, though Hippolyt Shpazhinsky's libretto is full of strong operatic stuff, the story is burdened with too many characters who add color but impede the action.

One of the chief problems is with the title character, an innkeeper named Kuma who is a *femme fatale* with irresistible allure. A powerful prince and his son are drawn into her orbit and become desperate rivals for her affection. In the bloody dénouement, abandoned wife kills temptress, father kills son, father loses mind. Tchaikovsky's writings suggest that he wanted to endow Kuma with the nobility of Verdi's Violetta and the fierce bravado of Bizet's Carmen, but there is simply not enough characterization for her to engage our sympathy. The opera starts encouragingly with effective tone painting of the rural atmosphere and episodes that may be overdrawn but are expertly linked together. Equally successful are the passionate scenes between Kuma and her two pursuers, father and son, in Act III. Unfortunately, though, the final act is quite disappointing.

A recording featuring the best Russian singers could have made an impressive case for this hard-luck opera, but this one falls short. Best among the principals is Oleg Klenov, whose firm, menacing baritone is just right for the fearsome Prince Nikita. The wide-ranging part holds no musical or dramatic terrors for him, and he meets its demands boldly and unsparingly. I have no complaints about tenor Lev Kuznetsov, either; he is not of top international caliber, but his tone is pleasant, his singing expressive and sensitively phrased.

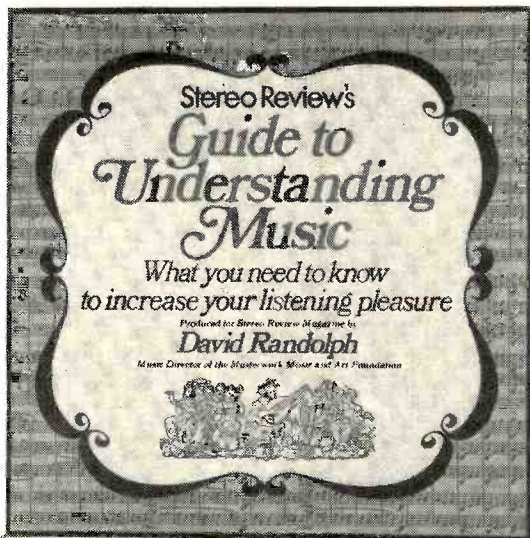
Galina Vishnevskaya in her prime must have played and sung Kuma to the hilt; Rimma Glushkova has the needed temperament and commitment, but she is rather uneven vocally. The tone quality of mezzo Liudmilla Simonova, as the abandoned Princess, is downright unpleasant. A few of the minor roles are more than routinely done: Evgeny Vladimirov is a mean and officious courtier, and Andrei Sokolov is an unctuous itinerant monk (a familiar figure in Russian operas). I do not question the conductor's dedication, but the orchestra seldom produces a sensuous sound and the engineering is below today's average.

A full libretto comes with the set, with useful notes by Dr. Boris Schwartz. This is not, however, the first-ever recording of *The Enchantress*; a mono version appeared here

(Continued on page 104)

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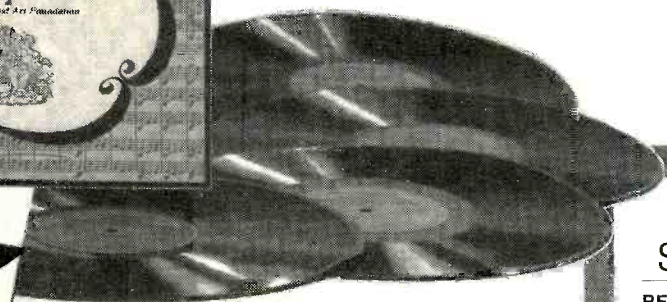
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around 1957 (on Westminster OPW 1402), to be swept away soon thereafter in the stereo avalanche. G.J.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *The Wasps, Overture; Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (see ELGAR)

WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll* (see BRAHMS)

COLLECTIONS

CARLO CURLEY: *Virtuoso French Organ Music. Gigout: Grand Choeur Dialogué. Guilant: March on a Theme by Handel. Saint-Saëns: Fantaisie in E-flat Major. Vierne: Carillon de Westminster; Clair de Lune. Boëllmann: Suite Gothique, Op. 25. Bonnet: Elves, Op. 7.* Carlo Curley (organ). RCA ARLI-3556 \$8.98, © ARK1-3556 \$8.98.

Performance: **Elegant**
 Recording: **Remote**

The "incredible" Carlo Curley, a North Carolina-born musician still under thirty, is a fine organist, and his program here, recorded on the French organ at the Royal Albert Hall in London, is made up entirely of fresh-sounding material. It must be said, however, that although the organ is considered one of the mightiest concert instruments in the world, you'd never know it from this low-level recording. I had to turn the volume all the way up just to hear the hushed passages—of which there are many—and there's inadequate presence even in the louder ones, such as when the most powerful of the instrument's more than a dozen tuba stops is giving its all in the *Grand Choeur Dialogué*. I practically had to stick my head inside a speaker to get much out of Vierne's *Clair de Lune*, which seemed to be coming all the way from the Mare Tranquillitatis by way of a moon-shot transmitter with failing batteries. P.K.

GIDON KREMER: *Romantic Miniatures for Violin. Khandoshkin (arr. Yampolsky): Sentimental Aria. Tchaikovsky: Mélodie, Op. 42, No. 3. Mussorgsky (arr. Rachmaninoff): Gopak. Fibich (arr. Kubelik): Poème. Vieuxtemps: Romance, Op. 7, No. 2 ("Despair"). Liszt: La Lugubre Gondola. Dinicu (arr. Heifetz): Hora Staccato. Beethoven: Six German Dances (WoO 42). Brahms (arr. Joachim): Hungarian Dance No. 5, in G Minor. Schubert (trans. Ernst): Der Erlkönig. Paganini (arr. Schumann): Caprice in E-flat Major, Op. 1, No. 14. Shostakovich (arr. Tsyganov): Prelude in A-flat Major, Op. 34, No. 17. L. Fischer: Amoroso. Kreisler: Marche Miniature Viennoise.* Gidon Kremer (violin); Oleg Maisenberg (piano). CBS M 35838 \$8.98, © MT 35838 \$8.98.

Performance: **Fewer hits than misses**
 Recording: **Good**

Gidon Kremer may be a fabulous fiddler, but this package of miniatures is a frustrating affair, offering precious little of the charm so essential to such pieces. Charm, indeed, yields to grotesquerie in the Kreisler piece, which is more suggestive here of Kashchei and his minions than of *alt Wien*. Even the familiar Mussorgsky *Gopak* comes off as rather bland and mechanical, while the Brahms Hungarian Dance has its

rhythm pulled about in a way that doesn't seem to fit its gypsy character. Ernst's transcription of Schubert's *Erlkönig* for unaccompanied violin is brilliantly played but is less gripping than either the original or the Liszt transcription for piano. The Liszt item here, which is not a transcription but the original version of the piece better known in the composer's subsequent arrangements for piano solo, does come off well, as do the more lyrical pieces—the Tchaikovsky, the Khandoshkin, and the Vieuxtemps.

It has been a long time since we've heard the famous Jan Kubelik arrangement of Zdeněk (not "Zenko" as in the annotation) Fibich's *Poème*, the tune of which is remembered, for better or worse, as *My Moonlight Madonna*, and Kremer's straight-faced treatment is surely to be preferred to the sentimentalized renditions that may have driven the piece out of the repertoire years ago. Best of all is the unaffectedly lovely performance of the *Amoroso* by the mysterious L. Fischer (Leopold? Ludwig? Sister Lydia?), an eminently agreeable piece, if not an especially memorable one. It may be that Kremer simply has a stronger bent for large-scale works than for what might be categorized as recital encore pieces, but it strikes me that there are fewer hits than misses in this collection. Accompanist Oleg Maisenberg matches the violinist's moods, and the recording captures both instruments well. R.F.

DUNCAN STEARNS: *Piano Recital. Griffes: Roman Sketches, Op. 7. Cui: Causerie (Etude), Op. 40, No. 6. Haydn: Sonata in E-flat Major (Hob. XVI/49). Ibert: The Little White Donkey. Rachmaninoff (arr. Stearns): Floods of Spring, Op. 14, No. 11.* Duncan Stearns (piano). ORION ORS 79352 \$7.98.

Performance: **Mixed**
 Recording: **Good, but some hiss**

The five works on this debut disc have nothing to do with each other, but, as in an actual recital program, they do provide interesting and effective contrasts. Duncan Stearns gives a sensitive account of the four Griffes pieces (the first of which is that composer's best-known work, *The White Peacock*) and suitably charming ones of the familiar Ibert and the all-but-unknown item by César Cui (the one member of the Russian "Five" whose music we never hear). His own rather Stokowskian (rather than Lisztian) arrangement of the Rachmaninoff song threatens to get out of hand as its climax is reached, but it doesn't quite, and there is no distortion of the original material. Only the Haydn sonata, I think, must be counted a disappointment. Compared with Gilbert Kalish's Nonesuch recording of this work (H-71344) or Artur Balsam's on Musical Heritage Society (OR H-112), Stearns' fluent but uneventful presentation strikes me as little more than accomplished sight-reading. The gratuitous mini-biography of Franz Joseph Haydn (when I see the name listed that way I wonder why the same sources don't give us *Wilhelm Richard Wagner*) tells us nothing about his keyboard music and does not specify the edition Stearns followed. Good piano sound, though there's more than a trace of tape hiss. R.F.

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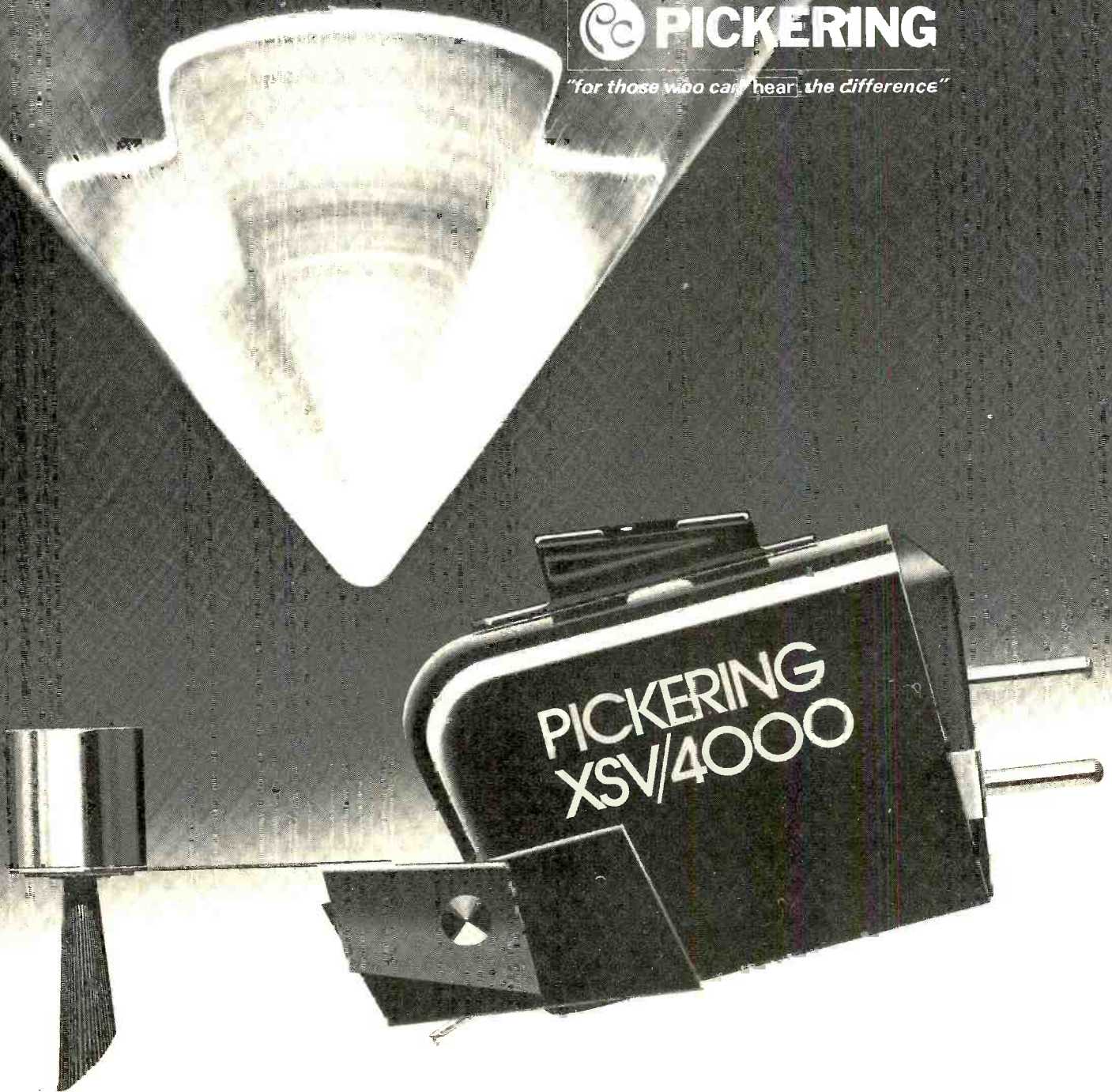
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ALABAMA: *My Home's in Alabama*. Alabama (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *My Home's in Alabama*; *Hanging Up My Travelin' Shoes*; *Why Lady Why*; *Getting Over You*; and six others. RCA AHL1-3644 \$7.98, © AHS1-3644 \$7.98, © AHK1-3644 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sweet**
Recording: **Good**

Didn't Jesse Winchester, in *Mississippi You're on My Mind*, say something about honeysuckle smelling so sweet "it like to make you sick"? This album sort of gives me that feeling, although coming from near the South and being a bit of a sugar-junkie myself, I like parts of it. What Alabama is, basically, is a Southern rock band overlaid with strings (one of the elements called sweeteners in the trade), evoking a softer sensibility than Charlie Daniels' band or Rossington-Collins' and generally using quieter, more lyrical material. It gets too sweet in the production, and I find I like the band's songs better than its performances. The vocals are fairly strong, and I think that, under all the sugar, the basic instrumentals are too. But overall, there are a lot of empty calories here. N.C.

THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND: *Reach for the Sky*. The Allman Brothers Band (vocals and instrumentals); other mu-

sicians. *Mystery Woman*; *Angeline*; *So Long*; and five others. ARISTA AL 9535 \$7.98, © A8T 9535 \$7.98, © ACT 9535 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Good**

The biggest trouble with this may be the expectations I—and maybe you—bring to it. I don't know what I *did* expect, exactly; what I found was that the Allman Brothers have picked up where they'd left off before their latest hiatus. I guess I had some vague notions about growth when I opened the jacket. If you listen to the best parts, *I Got a Right to Be Wrong*, *Angeline*, *Hell & High Water*, you'll find a lot of good stuff going on. The addition of guitarist Dan Toler allows Dickey Betts to play slide against lead, the way the band started, and Betts even puts some of Duane Allman's licks to good use in *I Got a Right*. But even the best stuff sounds vaguely like early Allman Brothers songs. I don't think nostalgia was what they intended or that they really wanted the poignancy to be in such a closed, self-referential circuit. But that's how it comes across, and I guess that's what bothers me. Since I wouldn't want the band to throw away its identity and *play* all that differently, I guess what they need, in these modern times, is some kind of adjustment in the material. Getting the mean-woman blues may be a continuing experience, but we've *heard* just about every song that can be concocted about it. Still, this band plays with loose zeal and tight professionalism. N.C.

ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION: *The Boys from Doraville*. Atlanta Rhythm Section (vocals and instrumentals). *Cocaine Charlie*; *Next Year's Rock & Roll*; *Putting My Faith in Love*; *Strictly R & R*; and five others. POLYDOR PD-1-6285 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6285 \$7.98, © CT-1-6285 \$7.98.

Performance: **Blasé**
Recording: **Very good**

As usual, the Atlanta Rhythm Section has written some sturdy songs for this album,

and they play them smoothly and professionally. Everything is as orderly as a corporate board meeting. But that's the problem here. Nobody leads; everything seems done by committee. The best of the cuts are *Next Year's Rock & Roll*, a jab at annual predictions by media pontificators, and *Strictly R & R*, about the members' early days as bar-band players, when they were all young and true believers. In between are some formula ballads that could be much more effective if they had some emotion behind them. There *is* a difference between sounding settled-in and sounding dull, but I'm not sure this group knows it any more. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PATTI AUSTIN: *Body Language*. Patti Austin (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Body Language*; *Another Nail for My Heart*; *S.O.S.: We've Got Tonight*; *(OOH-WEE) He's Killing Me*; *I Can't Stop*; and four others. CTI JZ 36503 \$7.98, © JZT 36503 \$7.98.

Performance: **All over the place**
Recording: **Good**

Patti Austin is a confusing creature; I simply don't know where to put her. Previous albums have reflected her venturesome spirit, but this one is a virtual labyrinth of musical styles. Meandering through it is quite pleasurable, though.

Austin opens with Isaac Hayes' marvelous *Body Language*, which is cast in an urbanely modern r-&-b mold, then drives in *Another Nail for My Heart* with a rockish disdain while the background instrumentalists follow in sassy pursuit. After a pause for the pop-flavored *S.O.S.*, she gives *We've Got Tonight* a country treatment—with a trace of the traditional crying tone that is usually played down by country stars who hope to cross over. But she doesn't stop there, at least not for long. She edges into disco a couple of times, and she sings *Love Me Again*, a charming ballad, with touching sentiment. This album is all over the place, but it goes down well everywhere be-

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = open-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- ⓐ = stereo cassette
- Ⓚ = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓛ = digital-master recording
- Ⓛ = direct-to-disc

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

cause of Patti Austin's exceptional ability to give every song exactly its due. P.G.

CHARLES AZNAVOUR: *Autobiographie*. Charles Aznavour (vocals); orchestra. *Mon Ami, Mon Judas; Autobiographie; Je Fantasma; and five others.* BARCLAY 96.108 \$8.98 (from Peters International, 619 West 54th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019).

Performance **Feverish**
Recording **Sumptuous**

Here's Charles Aznavour at fever pitch—what else?—in a collection of new songs that dwell on his favorite themes: his sex life, his artistic life, his sex life, his past life, his sex life, . . . Everything here is in French, with no translations. The orchestral accompaniment is as wantonly glorious as, apparently, some of Charles' conquests have been. At least to hear him tell it. P.R.

WARREN BERNHARDT: *Manhattan Update*. Warren Bernhardt (piano, Fender Rhodes piano, synthesizers); instrumental accompaniment. *Sara's Touch; Hang Glidin'; Praise;* and two others. ARISTA/NOVUS AN 3020 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Excellent**

Warren Bernhardt is an interesting slick-pop composer, as three of his compositions here—*Praise, New Moon, and Manhattan Update*—illustrate. And he's a really fine pianist with an elusive, eccentric, and individual style. Unfortunately, he also has a weakness for synthesizers. All too often what starts out as a glossily engaging piano exercise switches midway to just another of those squeak festivals that seem so naturally to spring from the computerized soul of synthesizers. It's too bad, because Bernhardt is obviously a fine musician, the album has been beautifully produced by him and Christine Martin, and there is an air of elegance about the whole project. P.R.

BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS: *Nuclear Blues*. Blood, Sweat & Tears (vocals and instrumentals). *Agitato; Manic Depression; Fantasy Stage; (Suite) Spanish Wine;* and two others. MCA MCA-3227 \$7.98, © LAXT-3227 \$5.98, © LAXC-3227 \$5.98.

Performance **The usual**
Recording **Good**

This is Blood, Sweat & Tears at their pretentious worst. The title song, *Nuclear Blues*, is about as far as they let their indignation and/or their interest dwell on the nukes theme. Having made their bow to political fashion, they proceed to fire their big guns on a "suite" called *Spanish Wine*. It is as heavy as lead, about as Spanish as New York State sherry, and wore away whatever patience I had left with this group. P.R.

BLUE ÖYSTER CULT: *Cultosaurus Erectus*. Blue Öyster Cult (vocals and instrumentals). *Black Blade; Monsters; Fallen Angel; Hungry Boys;* and five others. COLUMBIA JC 36550 \$7.98, © JCA 36550 \$7.98, © JCT 36550 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fraudulent**
Recording **Good**

Blue Öyster Cult has thrived for ten years by appealing to and exploiting the classic

fear of the bogeyman. Their material deals with demons, horror, and general paranoia, and their performances are hammy. Not that they weren't smart in picking their territory: fear of things that go bump in the night (or day) is established moments after birth and continues well into the adult years. In 1970 kids who listened to the Blue Öyster Cult were hanging around sleazy Union Square in New York City, obsessed with Nixon, the coming revolution, and Andy Warhol. Today's fans hang around Union Square and are obsessed with horror magazines, outer-space movies, and blue hair. Blue Öyster Cult continues to promote their brand of psycho-vaudeville, and it's still a non-musical scam. J.V.

PATTIE BROOKS. Pattie Brooks (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Reach for My Love; I'll Be Your Play Thing; Is This a Set Up;* and five others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7219 \$7.98, © NBL8 7219 \$7.98, © NBL5 7219 \$7.98.

Performance. **Buried treasure**
Recording **Okay**

I'm forming a new organization: the Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Pat-

tie Brooks. Ms. Brooks is a talented lady with a very special voice—husky and subtle, not at all typical of today's hard-edged female vocalists, especially in dance music. And it's a voice that cannot take productions like those dumped on her in this album. *I'm on a Winning Streak* and *I'll Be Your Play Thing*, for example, are up-tempo dance cuts ruined by overproduction. All those echoes and layers create a sonic haze that robs the songs of focus. The best of the dance lot is, interestingly, the only song in the album written by Brooks herself, *Is This a Set Up*. It's furiously fast, with a heavy arrangement (full string back-up and fine vocal support), and it deserves to be a dance single, but it ought to be remixed to clear some space for Brooks' dynamic singing. *Need to Be Back with You*, a ballad, shows the kind of care and attention her voice demands. The back-up is simple and jazz-like, and Brooks uses that lovely huskiness to ooze warm, sexy conviction. But it's just a taste of what this stylish singer can do, given half a chance. I.C.

JERRY BUTLER: *The Best Love*. Jerry Butler (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (Continued on page 110)



August Darnell (*Kid Creole*) and Andy Hernandez (*Coatimundi*)

Kid Creole and the Coconuts

THE latest and most theatrical spin-off of the beloved (in many circles) Savannah Dance Band gang is Kid Creole and the Coconuts. The music on their new "Off the Coast of Me" is wonderful—and not nearly as outrageous as the album's publicity or campy cover might lead you to believe. Producer/composer/creative force August Darnell still has a feel for unexpected jazz-calypso syncopations, and he still has his infectious good humor. The album's best cuts—the irreverently witty *Yolanda*, with its calypso-ized *Danny Boy* refrain, and a totally disarming calypso-disco version of

Lili Marlene (in German!)—are complex productions that reward repeated listening and communicate a sun-drenched joy in music making. Give Kid Creole and the Coconuts a listen—and have fun!

—Irving Cohn

KID CREOLE AND THE COCONUTS: *Off the Coast of Me*. Kid Creole and the Coconuts (vocals and instrumentals). *Mister Softee; Maladie d'Amour; Yolanda; Off the Coast of Me; Darrio; Lilli (sic) Marlene; Bogota Affair; Calypso Pan-American.* ZE/ANTILLES AN 7078 \$7.98.

Video Review

THE hardware, they say, anticipates the software . . . or is it the other way around? Frankly, I've never been able to get it straight. Then again, I can never remember if it's the ontogeny that recapitulates the phylogeny, or vice versa, either, so perhaps I just have trouble with sequential thought. Anyway, it has been well over a year since the first MCA/Philips videodisc players hit the stores in Atlanta, and as the units have become available in other markets, video nuts with the wherewithal to purchase the hardware have been panting for more software—not just old and new movies, but less obvious kinds of entertainment programs as well.

Now MCA has at long last let loose two of these, musical extravaganzas starring Olivia Newton-John and Loretta Lynn, and . . . well, Great Moments in Western Culture they are not. Which is too bad, really, because to my mind (this was my first hands-on videodisc experience) the hardware performed splendidly. For the record, the setup I used in auditioning the two discs was well above average. The audio was fed through a Carver C-4000 preamp, a Threshold Model 4000 power amp, and KEF 105 speakers. The disc player was the new Pioneer VP 1000, and the TV was a good 19-inch color set (these discs will play in black and white too).

The worst first: Ms. Newton-John's "Olivia" album was done originally as a prime-time special for ABC television, and it is safe to say that after its broadcast it occurred to nobody to compare it to Mary Martin's *Peter Pan* as a TV landmark. Among the highlights are a truly bizarre

disco production number, based on the concept of life as a Monopoly game (!), in which Newton-John portrays a divorced mother (Why? Don't ask.) and then sings a duet with gospel star James Cleveland that can only be described as Tepid Soul on White Bread; listless medleys of their hits by Andy Gibb (his chest hair, his medallions, and his orchestra) and Abba; and the show's most off-the-wall moment, a "jam session" (apparently staged by director Steve Binder to re-create the effect of a similar segment in his great Elvis comeback show of 1968) in which the various performers wreak havoc on everything from old Beach Boys songs to "Una voce poco fa" from *The Barber of Seville* (I'm not making this up). Throughout the rest, Newton-John disports herself in her inimitable I-Walked-with-a-Zombie manner, and the *mono* TV sound is roughly comparable to that of a portable AM radio during a period of heavy sun-spot activity. Video quality was, mercifully, pretty good, a bit grainier than I've seen with tape, but the color was excellent. Still, unless you're a connoisseur of truly perverse camp or want to be able to boast ten years from now that you were in at the beginning, I can think of no really *good* reason to add this one to your collection.

The Loretta Lynn disc is nowhere near that level of ghastliness, to be sure, but it *is* problematic. Recorded live in Reno, the style of the production leads me to suspect that it was originally designed as a special for one of the pay-cable networks; whether it was ever shown I have no idea. Ms. Lynn is, of course, one of the great voices of country music, but in this night-club setting she seems content to sleepwalk her perfunctory way through a predictable selection of hits (hers and other people's). While nothing she does induces the God-help-us cringes brought on by Newton-John, there's nothing particularly inspiring here either.

BUT the problems with the "Loretta" album are ultimately more technical than musical. For starters, the camera work is routine scaling down to mediocre, and the editing seems to be the work of that mythical assemblage of an infinite number of monkeys at an infinite number of editing decks. The sound, meanwhile, seems not to have been mixed at all: volumes rise and fall on individual instruments and voices with no regard to who is doing what at any given moment. Worse, the distortion level is very distracting even for TV, and to add insult to injury the whole thing, billed on the jacket in big red letters as stereo, is quite clearly mono. Unless the mastering engineer fell asleep during the tape-to-disc transfer, somebody is flim-flamming here. Again, the picture quality was significantly better than anything else about the package, with reasonable color resolution, although the on-stage lighting was rather garish, making it difficult to judge.

Two Videodisc Debuts: Olivia and Loretta



MCA Records



MCA Records

Even with all their faults, of course, discs like these two are not likely to prove fatal to the establishment of the video market. It's an infant technology, after all, and for a while people will probably put up with anything in order to have something to impress their friends with when they drop over; the parallel with the early stereo era, in this regard, is fairly obvious. But even assuming that the folks at MCA are as much at sea as the rest of us about what shape future programming for the medium should take, how come they didn't raid the vaults for existing musical TV performances of proven quality—such as Bette Midler's HBO special, ABC's *Heroes of Rock-and-Roll*, or any number of things from the PBS *Soundstage* series? Ah, well, foresight and good taste seem to be as rare among corporate decision makers as hindsight is common among critics. I remain convinced that the videodisc, whether the MCA system or one of its competitors, is going to be the major entertainment medium for whatever foreseeable future may be left to us. But if "Olivia" and "Loretta" are really the best the industry can come up with right now, then that future may be slower in arriving than I have been hoping.

FREE TV as well as AM and FM radio all too quickly discovered the lucrative path of lowest-common-denominator programming. Cable TV is not only delightedly exploring the same route but is already reveling in the arrogance of power that comes with being the only game in town in many areas (and are you ready for ads on HBO?). I would still like to be able to count on the videodisc to free us finally from the tyranny of the majority in broadcasting, to let us see what we want to see when we want to see it. I am perfectly willing to let the world consider my tastes in entertainment irredeemably kinky—just as long as it lets me enjoy them undisturbed. —Steve Simels

OLIVIA. Olivia Newton-John, Andy Gibb, Abba, Reverend James Cleveland (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Hopelessly Devoted to You; Have You Never Been Mellow; Please Mr., Please; Shadow Dancing; I Just Want to Be Your Everything; Dancing Queen; Take a Chance on Me*, and others. MCA DISCOVISION 74-005 \$19.95.

LORETTA. Loretta Lynn (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Hey Loretta; You're Lookin' at Country; Take Me Home, Country Roads; Out of My Head and Back in My Bed; Pregnant Again; One's on the Way; The Pill; I Wanna Be Free; Wine, Women, and Song; In the Ghetto; Let Your Love Flow; Foggy Mountain Breakdown; Gospel Medley; Don't Come Home A-Drinkin'; Naked in the Rain; You Ain't Woman Enough; Coal Miner's Daughter; They Don't Make 'Em Like My Daddy; We've Come a Long Way, Baby; Coal Miner's Daughter Reprise; I Saw the Light.* MCA DISCOVISION 74-004 \$19.95.



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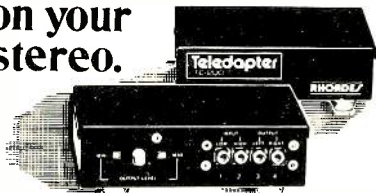
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companionment. *The Best Love I Ever Had; Would You Mind; Don't Be an Island; Reach Out for Me; We've Got This Feeling Again;* and three others. PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL JZ 36413 \$7.98, © JZT 36413 \$7.98.

Performance: **A slow take-off**
Recording: **Good**

Half of this record is excellent: the second half. Unfortunately, Jerry Butler seems to need almost the whole first side just to warm up. The lone delight on side one is *Don't Be an Island*, in which Debra Henry of Silk, as a surrogate Thelma Houston, joins Butler in a lilting and captivating duet. On the second side, Butler's smoothly assured handling of Burt Bacharach and Hal David's *Reach Out for Me* makes this one of the best readings ever of this song, and *We've Got This Feeling Again*, which also features Ms. Henry, is so cleverly convincing in its joyful exchanges that it is well worth the album price by itself. Even the opening song sounds far more enticing when it's repeated at the end of side two in a slower tempo that permits Butler to explore its emotional depths with his hallmark rusty, endearing voice. **P.G.**

CHIC: Real People. Chic (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Rebels Are We; You Can't Do It Alone; I Got Protection; 26;* and four others. ATLANTIC SD 16016 \$7.98, © TP 16016 \$7.98, © CS 16016 \$7.98.

Performance: **Disappointing**
Recording: **Fine**

After a string of jaunty successes such as *Très Chic* and *Good Times*, Chic is now trying to adapt to the harder sound the new decade demands. The goal is admirable but the results of the attempt aren't. *Rebels Are We*, this album's first single, exemplifies what's happened to the Chic sound: it has a staccato melody that is hard to dance to and even harder to listen to more than once. Worse, unlike some of their earlier work for the group, composers Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers have arranged the song without surprises; one listen is all it takes to exhaust its possibilities. The rest of the album is even weaker: preposterous lyrics, sometimes so crammed into repetitious rhythmic structures as to distort all meaning, and instrumental breaks that mix hard edges with off-beat tempos that try to be funky and end up merely being annoying. **I.C.**

DAVID ALLAN COE: I've Got Something to Say. David Allan Coe (vocals, vibes); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Back to Atlanta; Take It Easy Rider; If You'll Hold the Ladder; This Bottle; Take This Job and Shove It Too;* and five others. COLUMBIA JC 36489 \$7.98, © JCA 36489 \$7.98, © JCT 36489 \$7.98.

Performance: **Worth a listen**
Recording: **Good**

David Allan Coe says in the liner notes here that his stuff hasn't been getting much air play, maybe because of his lifestyle, and he feels "the time has come to make a few records for the radio guys." So he has stopped fading one cut into another, dedicated each song to someone the establishment likes, and brought in such guest singers and pick-

ers as Bill Anderson, Guy Clark, Larry Jon Wilson, George Jones, Kris Kristofferson, Pete Drake, Buddy Spicher, and Dickey Betts. You may think he's trying a little too hard to be "good," but in fact the album, like most albums, is as good as its material. Side one, headed by the fresh-sounding melody of the Coe-written *Back to Atlanta*, isn't bad at all. Side two tends to get silly, although the duets with Anderson and Jones are passable; the side is book-ended by *Hank Williams Junior-Junior* ("I ain't gonna call Hank Williams Junior junior anymore"), a goof written by Betts and Bonnie Bramlett that most people would have the sense to sing only at parties, and *Take This Job and Shove It Too*, Coe's ungraceful attempt to get more mileage out of his Johnny Paycheck-recorded song.

Coe is limited musically, and most of his "image problem" is his own doing, but he does deserve air play now and then. He sings with some power when a song has something to say, and his satirical, suspicious attitude is useful. Some of this is worth checking out. **N.C.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

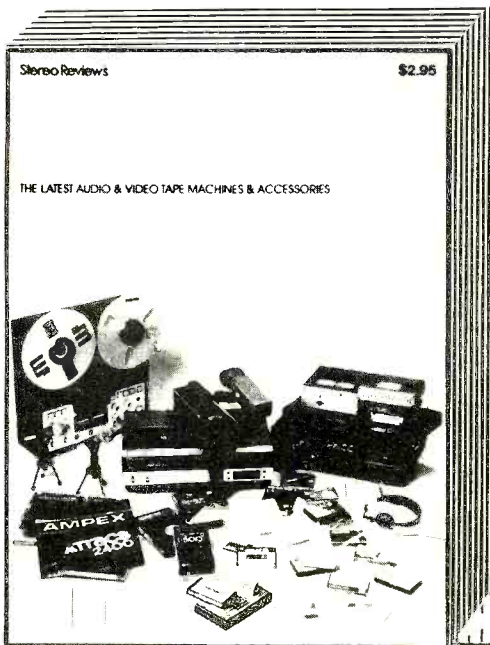
THE COMMODORES: Heroes. The Commodores (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Got to Be Together; Celebrate; Old-Fashion Love; Heroes; Wake Up Children;* and four others. MOTOWN M8-939M1 \$8.98, © M8-939KT \$8.98, © M8-939KC \$8.98.

Performance: **Reaching new heights**
Recording: **Good**

I have been slow to warm to the charms of the Commodores in spite of their status as today's top r-&-b group. Their spit-and-polish professionalism, coupled with a firm ability to gauge popular taste, is admirable, but they have usually seemed to imitate talented predecessors instead of offering anything truly innovative or fresh, particularly as compared with a trailblazing ensemble such as Earth, Wind and Fire.

"Heroes," however, has made me a fan. On it they explore a broad range of subjects and show a willingness to tackle material that is not so obviously tailored to ride the charts. Furthermore, they have gone beyond the simplistic boy-loves-girl and dance-dance-dance lyrics that are the formula staples of contemporary soul music. The album offers plenty of the kind of soul-funk we have come to expect of the Commodores, performed with stunning precision, but there are also some interesting variations. The title track is a haunting evocation of a past era when extraordinary men became martyrs in pursuit of social justice. The dirge-like cadences sear the memory, though the message is uplifting. In fact, messages dominate side two. *Wake Up Children* pulsates with inspirational folk flavor, and *Mighty Spirit* addresses the subject of religious faith with lean insistence. On the other hand, *All the Way Down, Celebrate*, and *Old-Fashion Love* are as gritty and gutsy as anything they've ever done. But what is special here is that the Commodores have tried to give meaning to their music, and I heartily commend them for it. **P.G.**

(Continued on page 112)



TAPE MEASURE

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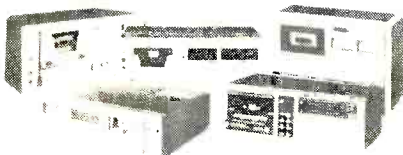
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I WENT on a blind date to a rock concert once, and when Jackson Browne came on it was clear that it was also a (gulp) generation-gap date. She kept exhorting Browne to "rock out, just once," and I just sat there as I do when (as John Prine said) I'm engrossed in not rolling my eyes back in my head. Jackson Browne does not rock out; Jackson Browne meanders eloquently—sometimes to a big beat and loud guitars, but not so as to cover the words. Jackson Browne believes in words. That's one of the things I like about him. But in his new album, "Hold Out," he seems determined to rock *harder* than he has before, and though the words still aren't covered with instruments, they're affected indirectly.

The desire to rock harder has led him to several decisions—mostly involving shortening his usually snaking, convoluted lines and opting for simplified melodies—that not only take the emphasis (pressure?) off the lyrics to some degree but contribute to an overall impression that he didn't have anything very large to say this time out anyway. Well, we all know how it is: you can advise others to hold out for "the real thing," but when you have a deadline to meet you have to write the stuff whether your muse shows up or not. Coming from Browne, this album is more nearly a holding action than a case of holding out. To keep things in perspective, though, it does make some small, useful additions to a collection of his songs, and when you compare it with most *other* people's albums, especially those that try to rock out, it would have to get a "Special Merit" tag.

This trying to rock too hard becomes annoying only once, really, in *That Girl Could Sing*. It is truly one of Browne's weakest songwriting efforts, and the backing consists mainly of one riff played over and over by several muscular instruments in unison. At the other extreme, there's *Of Missing Persons*, which has the "old" Jackson Browne asking, "Does it take a death to learn what a life is worth?" Although it is

nominally addressed to a girl child, it sounds to me as if the addressee might be Browne's son, whose mother committed suicide a few years ago. Browne is not maudlin or coy on the subject; in fact, I'd call this song graceful.

The rest certainly aren't weak songs, but they're all short on Brownness in subtle ways. *Disco Apocalypse*, the opener, is roughly about how it feels to be one of those characters in *Saturday Night Fever*, not exactly a ground-breaking theme. *Boulevard* works with it to book-end the first side with blue-collar/street-kid references (all oblique), sketchily describing a metaphorical turf where it's everyone for himself; it puts plenty of pictures in your head, but it doesn't find out the kind of thing a Browne song usually finds out. *Call It a Loan* is a nice song, but its ideas and ambition are small, and the title song gets its theme rehashed at unnecessary length in *Hold On Hold Out*, the last cut. Such overkill on the basically simple idea of holding out is probably the biggest mistake Browne makes here, since *both* songs tire you with their redundancy and make it appear that there's even more idea-stretching going on here than there actually is.

BROWNE'S rocking harder *sounds* pretty good most of the time, especially if you don't mind a lot of decoration on a little melody. The sound is only evolutionary notches away from the "usual" Brown sound, so it's never really thick, and such good musicians as David Lindley are mostly put to good use. —Noel Coppage

JACKSON BROWNE: *Hold Out*. Jackson Browne (vocals, guitar, piano); Russ Kunkel (drums); Bob Glaub (bass); David Lindley (guitar, steel guitar); other musicians. *Disco Apocalypse; Hold Out; That Girl Could Sing; Boulevard; Of Missing Persons; Call It a Loan; Hold On Hold Out*. ASYLUM 5E-511 \$8.98, © ET8-511 \$8.98, © TC5-511 \$8.98.

THE DIRT BAND: *Make a Little Magic*. The Dirt Band (vocals and instrumentals); Nicolette Larson (vocals); other musicians. *Make a Little Magic; Badlands; High School Yearbook; Anxious Heart; Do It; Harmony*; and four others. UNITED ARTISTS LT-1042 \$6.98, © 8LT-1042 \$6.98, © 4LT-1042 \$6.98.

Performance: **A trifle dense**
Recording: **Good**

When you get good in this business your fiercest competitor can be your own past, and the Dirt Band has gotten good. Compared with their stuff over the last year or so, or since Al Garth joined, this effort is light on variety and texture. It tries to rock harder, and the songs seems a little too straight and too much alike. The opening (title) cut is in the groove the DB works best, but the rest don't have that kind of air in them. In a way, they're not quite sophisticated enough for this band at this time. Still pretty good though, compared with the *other* competition. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ELEKTRICS: *Current Events*. Elekrics (vocals and instrumentals). *Some Lovin' Tonight; The Joker; I Remember You; We Are Americans; Boardwalk Beauty; Going to the Movies*; and five others. CAPITOL ST-12093 \$7.98, © 8XT-12093 \$7.98, © 4XT-12093 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Very good**

This is a surprisingly convincing album for a first-time effort. Elekrics' members are all veterans of various New Jersey seaside and highway bands, and they know what they're about. While they don't have the relaxed humor of the early Asbury Jukes, they have the same technical chops plus a working knowledge of rock history. *Some Lovin' Tonight* is a so-what opening number for the first set on a Saturday gig, but the arrangement is neatly paraphrased from Fats Domino's *I Want You to Know*, cut in 1959. The dandy of them all is *Boardwalk Beauty*, a funny and arresting description of a teenage beach bunny trying to be blasé during negotiations for a jump-on. The arrangement and performance ridicule equally the situation, the girl, and the lunkhead who's trying to score. Good stuff; keep it up, fellas. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

EROTIC DRUM BAND: *Touch Me Where It's Hot*. Erotic Drum Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Touch Me Where It's Hot; Dance in Your Pants; Pop Pop Shoo Wah; Everybody Get Dancin'*. PRISM PLP 1005 \$7.98, © PLP 1005-8 \$7.98, © PLP 1005-CAF \$7.98.

Performance: **Good dance disc**
Recording: **Superb**

There's more than one reason to buy this record. First, of course, there's *Pop Pop Shoo Wah*. This disco hit has a disarmingly lighthearted feel to the vocal line, and Richie Rivera's mix percolates with fresh inspiration throughout. Then there are the three other cuts, which need no apology. Despite the group's name, there is more to them

than simply drums, and the engineering is superb throughout. *Touch Me Where It's Hot* has an almost subliminal bass undercurrent that is hot indeed. *Dance in Your Pants* runs out of ideas too soon, but *Everybody Get Dancin'* works its limited means to maximum effect. Good stuff. I.C.

LARRY GATLIN: *The Pilgrim* (see Best of the Month, page 72)

MICKEY GILLEY: *That's All That Matters to Me*. Mickey Gilley (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *The Blues Don't Care Who's Got 'Em*; *The More I Turn the Bottle Up*; *Jukebox Argument*; *That's All That Matters*; *True Love Ways*; *Lyn'* *Again*; and four others. EPIC JE 36492 \$7.98, © JEA 36492 \$7.98, © JET 36492 \$7.98.

Performance: **Half good**
Recording: **Very good**

Depending on one's point of view, Mickey Gilley was until recently seen as either a housebroken version of or a PG-rated sequel to his cousin, Jerry Lee Lewis. His fine performance on the soundtrack of *Urban Cowboy*, filmed at his place, gained him some credence with the talkers-about-music. He has his own sound, and though he is, like Lewis, chained to the piano, he is always potentially more interesting there than Lewis is. Where Lewis comes on as bigger than the material, Gilley often seems smugly above it. Still, he is some sort of sequel to Jerry Lee, and it's unfortunate that this album seems programmed to demonstrate the one big weakness that ties them together. We can call it, rhetorically, trouble with changing the pace. Rhetorically because it isn't the speed of the songs that does it but something more like their spirit. The first side of this is made up of a string of varied-tempo honky-tonk songs that profit from Gilley's give-it-a-whirl attitude. The second side, though, turns to softer, quieter songs that take themselves too seriously to go with Gilley's normally condescending approach; as a result, he, like his cuz, seems lost in them most of the time. But that first side is near crackerjack quality. N.C.

LARRY GRAHAM: *One in a Million You*. Larry Graham (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Stand Up and Shout About Love*; *Sweetheart*; *There's Something About You*; *When We Get Married*; *Time for You and Me*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3447 \$7.98, © M8 3447 \$7.98, © M5 3447 \$7.98.

Performance: **Different**
Recording: **Good**

Until this album, I had no idea that Larry Graham was such a crooner. I thought of him as that guy who was always jumping up and down while engaging in musical trickery with his group Graham Central Station. But croon he does here, in a manner that at times recalls Arthur Prysock or the old Lou Rawls in his straighter moments. The title song, *Sweetheart*, and *When We Get Married* are all three so quaintly old-fashioned that I found it difficult to take them seriously, particularly in view of the super-hip image Graham presents on the album cover. (Continued overleaf)

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The more humorous numbers (*I'm So Glad It's Summer Again*, *I Just Can't Stop Dancing*) seem more his style. Though I'm certain his robust baritone will appeal enormously to hordes of sentimental females, I think he must be putting us on with this one. P.G.

TOM T. HALL: *Soldier of Fortune*. Tom T. Hall (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Soldier of Fortune*; *Me and Jimmie Rodgers*; *We're All in This Thing Alone*; *Texas Never Fell in Love with Me*; *Whiskey Castles*; and five others. RCA AHL1-3685 \$7.98, © AHS1-3685 \$7.98, © AHK1-3685 \$7.98.

Performance: **Pretty good**
Recording: **Bright, but . . .**

I didn't like this record at first, and I still don't think Hall had the optimum amount of energy for it; his singing and writing, with their recurrent wry, low-key humor, both seem slightly depressed. But the second time I liked it somewhat more. What bothers me most is the lifelessness of the tunes—too many variations of the lazy-country-dawg melody. The lyrics, too, are a little lazy or pulled back or something, although *Back When Gas Was Thirty Cents a Gallon* is more than nostalgia for low prices, and *The Six O'Clock News*, in which the little woman is the celebrity ("I'm worried about the weather report/And she's on the Six O'Clock News"), is an interesting place for country music to have come to. The backing, with bluegrass singers in and out of it, is straightforward and pretty good. Be warned, though: I have two copies of this, and each stops the stylus at five places on side one. The same five places. N.C.

HALL AND OATES: *Voices*. Daryl Hall, John Oates (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *How Does It Feel to Be Back*; *Big Kids*; *United State*; *Hard to Be in Love with You*; *Kiss on My List*; *Got a Lotta Nerve*; and five others. RCA AQL1-3646 \$8.98, © AQS1-3646 \$8.98, © AQK1-3646 \$8.98.

Performance: **Boppity, boppity**
Recording: **Good**

Hall and Oates don't really take twenty-nine songs in a row at the same tempo here, and it really doesn't last for seven hours and twenty-three minutes; it just seems that way. Actually, the album has recurrent tunefulness, and if you're too young to have heard Sam and Dave or the Rascals you could, now and then, be impressed by it. But it seems that about half of this is designed for people considerably younger and/or more naïve than Hall and Oates—there's enough "my baby" stuff to fill your quota for the next year—and the rest of it (including a cover of *You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'*; the Righteous Brothers they ain't is all that establishes) seems to say "we are too r-&-b singers." Well, they have good voices, but as two-part harmonies go, theirs are not exceptional, and on this album they have just about enough soul for Top-40 radio. N.C.

IRON CITY HOUSEROCKERS: *Have a Good Time but Get Out Alive*. Iron City Houserockers (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment.

Have a Good Time (But Get Out Alive); *Don't Let Them Push You Around*; *Pumping Iron*; *We're Not Dead Yet*; *Blondie*; *Old Man Bar*; and six others. MCA MCA-5111 \$8.98, © MCAT-5111 \$8.98, © MCAC-5111 \$8.98.

Performance: **So-so**
Recording: **Very good**

The Iron City Houserockers are from Pittsburgh. Their sponsoring agency is Cleveland International, whose other clients include Meat Loaf and the intriguing Ellen Foley (she sings back-up on one of the tunes here). But, alas, despite these promising associations, the Iron City Houserockers are little more than an average howler-screamer outfit trying as hard as they can to sound like the Rolling Stones circa 1966. Once in a while the band really pulls itself together for a solid ensemble sound (*Pumping Iron*) that is not exactly distinguished but is at least enlivened by Marc Reisman's Chicago-blues-style harmonica. The lyrics cover the same dreary, overworked subject matter that many young bands feed on: honky-tonks, watching television, fantasies of petty crime, complaints about girls who walked out, youthful paranoia about the big bad world, and assorted glop. But at least you can dance to the beat. J.V.

LA TOYA JACKSON. La Toya Jackson (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Save Your Love*; *Are You Ready?*; *Night Time Lover*; *A Taste of You*; and four others. POLYDOR PD-1-6291 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6291 \$7.98, © CT-1-6291 \$7.98.

Performance: **Unimpressive soloist**
Recording: **Crisp, clean, brilliant**

This is an engaging, thoroughly professional debut album by a young woman who already has an adoring public thanks to her TV appearance with her illustrious family, the Jacksons. It is chock full of mighty good music, diversified so as to appeal to that broad TV audience, and lovingly arranged. But the singer falls short.

Whether she's working through the good dance opener, *If You Feel the Funk*, the haunting melody of the fine ballad *My Love Has Passed You By*, or the rip-roaring *If I Ain't Got It*, La Toya Jackson's breathy, little-girl voice is simply inadequate. She tries to infuse emotion into it, especially in the ballads; she even adopts brother Michael's best grunts to demonstrate involvement. But even her most focused singing, such as in the high-powered dance number *Night Time Lover*, leaves the listener with no distinct impression.

What is impressive—mightily—is the quality of the music going on around her. Like much of the Jackson family's work, this is a wonderfully musical album. The songs range from gorgeous to rousing. Every one of them is addressed on its own terms and given a just-right arrangement, and the album utilizes every technique known to pop music makers in the Eighties. It's a sparkling production and a rewarding listen in these grim days. As for La Toya herself, though, I'm not impressed. I.C.

FRANCE JOLI: *Tonight*. France Joli (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *This Time*; *Tonight*; *Stoned in Love*;

Feel Like Dancing; and three others. PRELUDE PRL 12179 \$7.98, © PRL 12179 \$7.98, © PRL 12179 \$7.98.

Performance: **Undistinguished**
Recording: **Excellent**

It was uncommonly honest not to have called this album "Feel Like Dancing" after the successful single that followed France Joli's crossover Top-10 hit *Come to Me*. This is not really a dance album. Side one is devoted to a series of retro-pop ballads of the Manilow marshmallow school. Harps, muted horns, and banks of strings back up one undistinguished song after another, all sung in that nasal head tone that young singers can push into something that passes for a belt. Only when saxophonist Richard Beaudet breaks into *Stoned in Love* with some real music do things come to life. This is the album's one bow to rock, recorded with a hard sonic ambience, tougher in its lyrics, freer in the instrumentals. Side two has the beat, notably in *Feel Like Dancing*, but not the heat. I.C.

KISS: Unmasked. Kiss (vocals and instrumentals). *Easy As It Seems; Is That You?; Naked City; Shandi; She's So European; Talk to Me*; and five others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7225 \$7.98, © NBL8 7225 \$7.98, © NBL5 7225 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good as it needs to be**
Recording: **Likewise**

Kiss as a 1980 rock band is a pretty ludicrous proposition. I mean, these guys were good for a laugh in their day—kids took them every bit as seriously as my generation took Bob Dylan (there's a lesson in that)—and, as loud noises went, they were actually rather entertaining. But what's nicest about their current decline (if you've seen them live, you know their audience is now the hard-core fourteen-year-old bubblegum crowd) is that we no longer have to endure five-thousand-word think pieces on how they're the legitimate expression of the collective adolescent psyche or the Grand Funk Railroad populist band of the Me Decade. Now that the whole grisly charade is winding down, we can listen to "Unmasked" and hear it for what it is: the unexpected return of the Brill Building mentality that defined the Music Biz in the days before Don Kirshner began thanking the William Morris Agency on nationwide television. Or, to put it bluntly, soulless, stupid, and boring product. They should title their next one "Off" and look for day jobs if they want to get out of this with some part of their legend intact. S.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOHN KLEMMER: Magnificent Madness. John Klemmer (tenor saxophone); Danny O'Keefe, David Batteau (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Magnificent Madness; I Can't Help It; We Couldn't Start Over; Lifesong*; and four others. ELEKTRA 6E-284 \$7.98, © ET8-284 \$7.98, © TC5-284 \$7.98.

Performance: **Lovely**
Recording: **Superb**

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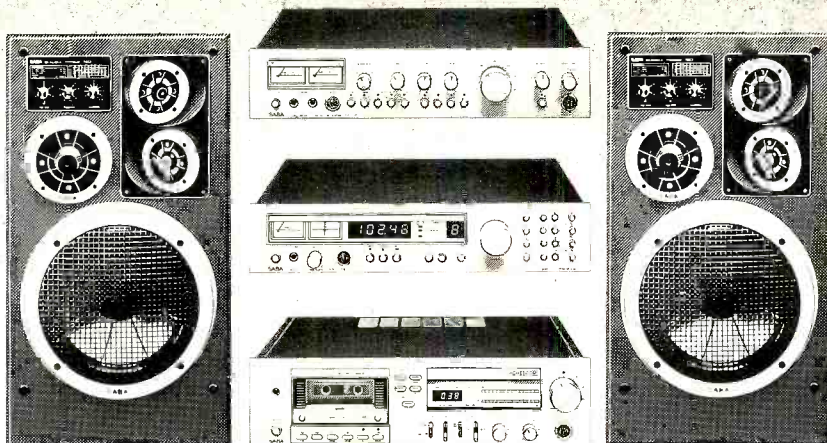
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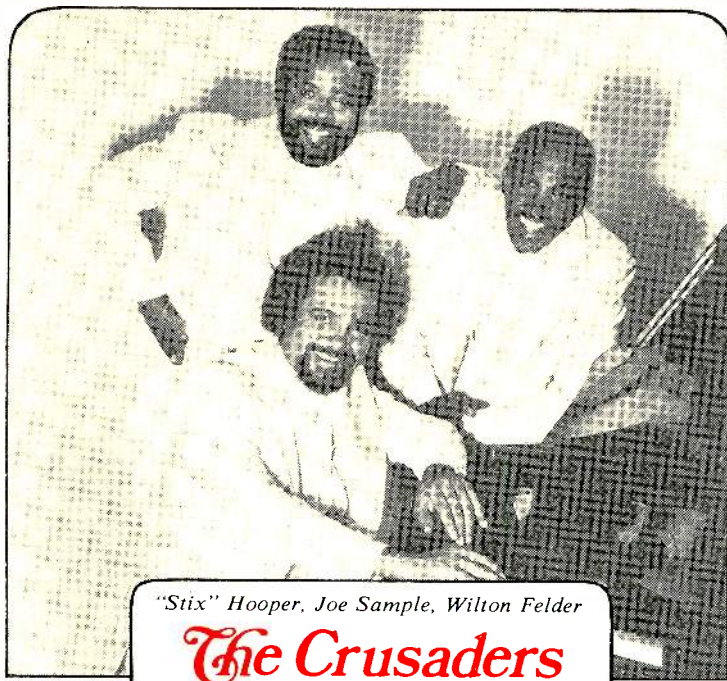
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The Crusaders

THE Crusaders began as the Jazz Crusaders back in the mid-Sixties, when pre-fusion jazz was pretty clearly divided between the "hot" and the "cool." The former style was represented by such living giants of the tradition as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, the latter by such bold experimenters as John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman, virtuoso players intent on extending the accepted boundaries of the music. The terrain between was occupied by musicians content with popularity rather than critical acclaim, not only the countless organ combos but also such folks as Les McCann, the Three Sounds, and the Jazz Crusaders. They helped fill the gap between pure jazz, which many perceived as becoming moribund, and free jazz, which for many was too hard to follow. Nobody who was *serious* about jazz liked them, but the public did.

Most of the popular funksters of that period have faded away, but the Jazz Crusaders have survived. Though they have changed their name, they have stuck with making music that is readily accessible, music that retains the swinging flavor of jazz but is built on catchy, carefully defined melodies enhanced by modest, effective instrumental elaborations. They don't pre-

tend to profundity; they just produce good, easy-listening jazz.

The Crusaders' new MCA album, "Rhapsody and Blues," is sophisticated enough to appeal to a jazz enthusiast yet melodically and rhythmically direct enough to reach the casual listener as well. Wilton Felder is no Charlie Parker or Coltrane, but, like a hip blues balladeer, he makes his sax *sing* in all its registers (good examples here are *Honky Tonk Struttin'*, *Last Call*, and *Elegant Evening*). Percussionist Stix Hooper and pianist Joe Sample play their instruments with hands and minds mel- lowed by many years' experience in pleasing audiences. And there's a fine guest solo by singer Bill Withers on the opener, *Soul Shadows*, about remembering Fats Waller on a foggy San Francisco morning. This is good music, if only because it makes you feel that way. —Phyl Garland

THE CRUSADERS: *Rhapsody and Blues*. The Crusaders (instrumentals); Bill Withers (vocal); instrumental accompaniment. *Soul Shadows; Honky Tonk Struttin'; Elegant Evening; Rhapsody and Blues; Last Call; Sweet Gentle Love*. MCA MCA-5124 \$8.98, © MCA-5124 \$8.98, © MCA-5124 \$8.98.

it is simply beautiful. Three cuts even include vocals, one of which says, "It's a life heard through a horn/It all comes from the heart." I believe it.

Klemmer's horn is a mellow, bluesy tenor sax, and it is backed here by jazzy combos of guitar, piano, bass, drums, and brass. Danny O'Keefe's intelligent, friendly voice makes *Lifesong* the album's highlight. But there are many quiet treasures in these pretty tunes: the flickering electronic

echoes of *Heart (Summer Song)*, the gentle introduction of guitars picking up the swaying beat of *Don't Take Your Love Away*, the haunting melody of the chorus to *I Can't Help It*. Things like these make this album glow with warmth. I.C.

CLEO LAINE AND JAMES GALWAY: *Sometimes When We Touch*. Cleo Laine (vocals); James Galway (flute); instrumental accompaniment. *Drifting, Dreaming;*

Play It Again, Sam; Skylark; Anyone Can Whistle; and eight others. RCA ARL1-3628 \$8.98, © ARK1-3628 \$8.98.

Performance: **Pap**
Recording: **Souped up**

The idea of teaming the considerable vocal talent of Cleo Laine with the flawless flute of James Galway must have struck the A&R people at RCA as simply and irresistibly surefire. The results, alas, are something else again. All the promotion in the world will not conceal from any listener with less than a totally tin ear that although what we have here may not easily be categorized as classical, pop, or jazz, it fits quite nicely under the general rubric of junk. In principle, "crossing over" from the classics may be a perfectly sound idea, but it has its hazards, and in this case both performers have been run over musically in the process. One might forgive Laine for mouthing Don Read's worthless words to the tune of Satie's apparently indestructible *Gymnopédie No. 1 (Drifting, Dreaming)*, but when she intones, into a probably astonished microphone, her Gertrude Steinish *How, Where, When?* to the tune of the Pachelbel Canon in D it is difficult to refrain from flinching. Even worse ordeals are in store. All the while poor Mr. Galway tootles away expertly and, except in that Gaelic gambol *The Fluter's Ball*, quite irrelevantly. Just how winning Cleo Laine can be on the right turf is apparent here in her languid, lazy treatment of Hoagy Carmichael's *Skylark* and in Alan Claire's *Keep Loving Me*. But the range for which she is so justly famous has finally been exceeded. P.K.

LAMONT CRANSTON BAND: *Up from the Alley*. Lamont Cranston Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Oughta Be a Law; Tore Up; Route 66; Keep On Drivin'; Don't Go*; and seven others. WATERHOUSE 10 \$7.98.

Performance: **So-so**
Recording: **Okay**

It's been said that Midwestern bands tend to be five years behind what's going on in New York or Los Angeles, and the Lamont Cranston Band from Minneapolis is proof. The lead singer here doesn't seem to realize that trying to sound like Mick Jagger is passé. The group's own material is pale, with the notable exception of *Oughta Be a Law* by vocalist/keyboardist Bruce McCabe, which is easy to like for its no-frills construction. The band deserves credit for selecting Sonny Boy Williamson's *Fattening Frogs for Snakes*, though their version of it is rather pallid; they do better with Hank Ballard's *Tore Up*. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ANDY FAIRWEATHER LOW: *Mega-Shebang*. Andy Fairweather Low (vocals, guitar, bass, drums); instrumental accompaniment. *Night Time DJ'ing; Hard Hat Boogie; Let Ya Beedle Lam Bam; Hello Josephine; A Fool 4 Some*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3450 \$7.98, © M8 3450 \$7.98, © M5 3450 \$7.98.

Performance: **Well, all right!**
Recording: **Very good**

Andy Fairweather Low makes giddy, beer-guzzling, girl-pinching rock-and-roll with

no pretenses or handicaps whatever. There isn't a single cut on this album that can really stand by itself, and the album as an "artistic whole" is inconsequential. But, oh my dears and dearies, it is *such* fun! Andy is a straightforward writer and a barely acceptable singer, but what he lacks in content and technique he more than makes up for in verve and hilarity. He returns rock to its primary purpose—to snort, bellow, whine, cajole, tickle, and please. If this album doesn't get your feet dancing and your hips twisting, if it doesn't make you chuckle at the glorious foolishness of rock, if it doesn't lubricate your glands—well, my friend, there's just no hope for you. J.V.

MAGAZINE: The Correct Use of Soap. Magazine (vocals and instrumentals). *Because You're Frightened; I Want to Burn Again; A Song from Under the Floorboards; Thank You (Falettin Me Be Mice Elf Agin);* and six others. VIRGIN VA 13144 \$7.98, © TP 13144 \$7.98, © CS 13144 \$7.98.

Performance: **Morbid**
Recording: **Good**

Things must be worse in Britain than I supposed. Magazine's debut album has been hailed as some sort of landmark by British critics, who profess to find deep meaning in it. This American cousin had difficulty understanding much of it, since the lyrics are delivered in glottal undertones, but occasionally words and phrases are distinguishable, as well as the general sentiment, which is that everything is simply awful. Even Sly Stone's *Thank You (Falettin Me Be Mice Elf Agin)* is taken at a dirge tempo with a doomsday vocal. Once in a while the band perks up instrumentally, but then those vocals come in again. Mrs. Thatcher, can't you do anything for these poor, vocally disadvantaged lads? J.V.

CAROLYN MAS: Hold On. Carolyn Mas (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Stay True; Running from the High Life; Go Ahead and Cry Now; All for You; He's So Cool;* and five others. MERCURY SRM-1-3841 \$7.98, © MC8-1-3841 \$7.98, © MCR4-1-3841 \$7.98.

Performance: **Monochromatic**
Recording: **Good**

Carolyn Mas has a strong, accurate voice and the special energy her calling requires, but look at it this way: flat land at a high elevation is just as boring as flat land anywhere else. Or this way: headlines set all in capital letters get less attention, not more. As a writer, especially this time out, Mas does tend to deal in headlines rather than actual lyrics, but the all-cap reference is to how she *sings* most of these ditties: at top volume throughout. Aside from that, there's the problem that her "tunes," while they have an attractive drive to them, usually use a narrow, sing-songy range of notes that demand of the instrumentalists not music but the repetition of some dumb riff. Things do grow slightly more varied on the second side, which ends with a very nice, slow, voluptuous song called *Amsterdam* that uses only a piano and sax and vocals. The instrumentalists, under Steve Burgh, do very well throughout, considering the circumstances. (Continued overleaf)

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This is only the second album from Carolyn Mas; I hope she will get her powers more under control and improve the circumstances of the next one. *N.C.*

DAVE MASON: *Old Crest on a New Wave.* Dave Mason (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Paralyzed; You're a Friend of Mine; I'm Missing You; Talk to Me; Save Me; Get It Right;* and four others. COLUMBIA JC 36144 \$7.98, © JCA 36144 \$7.98, © JCT 36144 \$7.98.

Performance. **Too much flotsam**
Recording **Good**

Sturgeon's Law: Ninety per cent of everything is junk. Dave Mason, a fine guitarist

and adequate singer, is not junk, but an awful lot of his material is. There is maybe one song in this whole bunch—*Trying to Get Back to You*—that isn't, and it is a thoroughly derivative recycling of things that can only be backed, seemingly, with recycled George Harrison guitar licks. I guess I could keep reviewing pop records for forty years and still be regularly amazed that people who seem to be good musicians don't reject such stuff the first time they hear it, or before they finish writing it, or whatever. Through it all, Mason plays his nice, lyrical guitar, trying more tricks than Andrew Gold to make the junk sound like something else. What it mostly sounds like is a good guitar player playing junk. *N.C.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAZE: *Joy and Pain.* Maze (vocals and instrumentals). *Changing Times; The Look in Your Eyes; Family; Roots;* and three others. CAPITOL ST-12087 \$7.98, © 8XT-12087 \$7.98, © 4XT-12087 \$7.98.

Performance. **Rapturous**
Recording. **Good**

This is an alluring album; the music seems to reach out gently, embrace you, and leave a sweet sensation. It opens with such delicate instrumental statements that it might easily be taken for modernistic mood music, but even when lead vocalist Frankie Beverly begins to sing, the delicacy is sustained. How marvelous to discover a group that knows how to arouse the listener without being loud! The pace is accelerated for such danceable numbers as *Roots* and *Southern Girl*, but tasteful restraint prevails. This is Frankie Beverly's show from start to finish: he composed all the songs, arranged them, does most of the singing, plays several instruments, and produced the album. My thanks to the man responsible for this sweetly offbeat r-&b set. *P.G.*

HILLY MICHAELS: *Calling All Girls.* Hilly Michaels (vocals, drums); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Calling All Girls; Without You; Teenage Days; Shake It and Dance; Gemini;* and five others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3431 \$7.98, © M8 3431 \$7.98, © M5 3431 \$7.98.

Performance. **Overblown poodle-rock**
Recording **Good**

Hilly Michaels, who's been around, is a talented guy with a gift for writing amusing throwaway pop confections, but producer Roy Thomas Baker provides the real action here—and that's not meant as a compliment to either of them. Baker's trademark keyboard-dominated sound (cluttered, revisionist George Martin) has become as identifiable as Phil Spector's, but if possible it's even more mannered, and by now it is a cliché. Everything he does—from the Cars to Dusty Springfield to Ron Wood—sounds the same, and invariably his work overwhelms the nominal star. Such is clearly the case here: Baker's relentless Maximalism makes Michaels' engaging Sixties-influenced songs sound at best overblown and at worst offensively cute. There may be a certain perverse fascination in trying to pinpoint Liza Minnelli (!) amidst the din of the background vocals, but what that has to do with rock-and-roll is anybody's guess. *S.S.*

THE MIX: *American Glue.* The Mix (vocals and instrumentals). *Glad Tidings; Lovegram; Forever; Chain of Fools; American Glue;* and four others. WORD OF MOUTH WOM 1011 \$4.98 (from Word of Mouth Records, Inc., 65 West 55th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019).

Performance. **Very good, but . . .**
Recording: **Good, but . . .**

The Mix is an athletic New York quartet that's very tight instrumentally and features extraordinarily passionate singing—a commando squad with a jam-session feel. But, alas, their album suffers from producer Felix Pappalardi's programming, which is so relentless that by the third cut admira-

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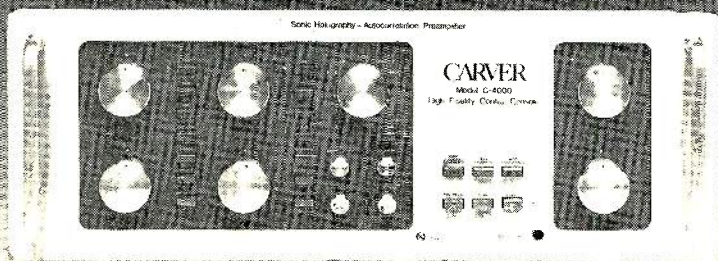
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tion for the band's energy is undercut by a wish for some variety. Pappalardi was bassist and producer for Mountain, a late-Sixties semi-cult album group that indulged in killer sound levels. He's been flopping about for a decade, and his attempt to re-create Mountain is a disservice to the Mix. For their sake I hope this debut album leads to better things, such as a bigger label and a more versatile producer. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

NIGHTHAWKS. The Nighthawks (vocals and instrumentals). *Mainline; Upside Your Head; Back to the City; Pretty Girls and Cadillac; Everynight and Everyday; One Nite Stand;* and five others. MERCURY SRM-1-3833 \$7.98, © MC8-1-3833 \$7.98, © MCR4-1-3833 \$7.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Very good**

With this album the Nighthawks move from a small, limited-distribution label (Adelphi) to one with national distribution and some clout in the retail stores. The change will, I hope, bring them the larger audience they deserve. Formed five years ago in the Washington, D.C., area, the 'Hawks are, at this moment, the only redeeming feature of the nation's capital. They play beguiling, muscular blues and rockers from the Forties through the Sixties as these songs were meant to be played—entertainingly. The 'Hawks are serious musicians, but they also have a grand sense of fun. On stage and on record they always present as much humor as hubris. Jim Thackery's beefy vocals and "fat" guitar sound, Mark Wenner's bold but intimate harmonica stylings, and the precision of bassist Jan Zukowski and drummer Pete Ragusa combine to make the Nighthawks a real *band* in the sense that the ensemble and solo playing are so well integrated that they're organic.

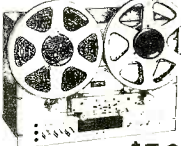


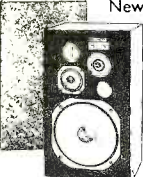


My only quibble about this album concerns its programming, which follows the conventional rule that the most commercial cuts go on the first side. In this case, the result is to dump the *best* cuts on side two. *Mainline*, which opens side one, is a strong performance, but it doesn't have the momentum of the equally strong *Brand New Man*, which opens side two. Only the very last cut on side one, *Pretty Girls and Cadillac*, displays the 'Hawks' peculiarly delicate sense of humor and feel for period styles, whereas side two is full of gems. But, as I said, this is a quibble; for Nighthawks fans this album is an Event. J.V.

ALAN PRICE: *Rising Sun.* Alan Price (vocals, keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *House of the Rising Sun; I'm Coming Back; Mr. Sunbeam; Love You True; Perfect Lady; Wake Up!*; and four others. JET NJZ 36510 \$7.98, © JZT 36510 \$7.98.

Performance: **Frustrating**
Recording: **Good**

Enough talent went into this that it should really *be* something. As it is, it reminds me of that album Harry Nilsson and John Lennon made together several years ago: mostly cynicism and irony and goofing off. You could take Alan Price as being sarcastic—

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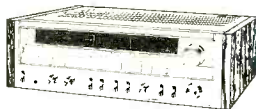
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meaning the opposite of what he says—in most of the songs here and they'd work just as well. Of course, he's intermittently interesting, and he keeps showing that he can be musical, but I keep feeling shortchanged. Music is basically somewhat romantic; it needs *some* sincerity now and then. Yet I can't blame Price for failing to seem naive when he's not; Paul McCartney, whom this album also brings to mind, can do that with some grace, but most people shouldn't try it. Maybe Price should try writing over his head, challenging himself, rather than telling us in these indirect ways that he knows better. N.C.

EDDIE RABBITT: *Horizon*. Eddie Rabbitt (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *I Love a Rainy Night; 747; Drivin' My Life Away; Short Road to Love; Rockin' with My Baby; Pretty Lady;* and four others. ELEKTRA 6E-276 \$7.98, © ET8-276 \$7.98, © TC5-276 \$7.98.

Performance: **New and improved**
Recording: **Good**

In the gantlet of common people's (ugh) magazines you have to run to get out of the supermarket, Eddie Rabbitt is known nowadays as a "throb," that is, a pretty face who can halfway carry a tune. Musical demands on throbs aren't very high, though they'd damned well better watch their step with hair spray. The best that those of us not dreaming of pairing off with any given throb can hope for is that his or her latest batch of songs won't be *too* annoying on the radio. I'm happy to report that a few in this batch are tolerable. Rabbitt has abandoned all pretense of any connection with country music—although, as always, his real target seems to be the suburbs—and has upped his tempo and magnified the beat to the point where he rocks more than Rex Smith and Donny Osmond combined. *Drivin' My Life Away*, which almost suggests something about the inertia of motoring, is almost a real song. And two or three other things here almost stir actual thought processes. I didn't notice my emotions kicking up, but then I'm not in the market for a throb. N.C.

THE RECORDS: *Crashes* (see Best of the Month, page 76)

MALVINA REYNOLDS: *Mama Lion*. Malvina Reynolds (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Skagit Valley Forever; Bury Me in My Overalls; The Judge Said; If You Were Little; The Devil's Baptizin'; The Little Mouse;* and six others. CASSANDRA 050 \$5 (plus 50¢ postage and handling from Cassandra Records, 2027 Parker Street, Berkeley, Calif. 94704).

Performance: **Feisty**
Recording: **Good**

Malvina Reynolds was an indomitable woman whose passion for social justice was combined with an innate ability to express her ideas and ideals through adroitly crafted tunes and lyrics. She died two years ago, at the age of seventy-seven, in the middle of planning a new album. Unlike many of her previous—and most winning—efforts, which were aimed mainly at children, this one was strictly for adults, its title to be

(Continued on page 123)

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"Purely Political." After her death this release, "Mama Lion," was pieced together by friends from an assortment of sources—studio sessions in Finland in 1976, live concert recordings, ad hoc recordings for various political causes—as an approximation of what she had intended. Political it certainly is, sometimes naggingly and self-righteously so. But even in such items as a reggae about the dangers of nuclear power plants or the sad saga of a poor woman forced into having a back-alley abortion, what saved Reynolds from being a kind of folkie Jane Fonda was her high-spirited humor. "Mama Lion" always mingled laughter with her growls. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROSSINGTON-COLLINS BAND: *Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere.* Rossington-Collins Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Prime Time; Three Times As Bad; Don't Misunderstand Me; One Good Man; Opportunity;* and four others. MCA MCA-5130 \$8.98, © MCAT-5130 \$8.98, © MCAC-5130 \$8.98.

Performance: **Fiery**

Recording: **Very good**

Mark it down: this is the first Southern rock band with an imposing and obviously liberated female fronting it on the vocals. On second thought, don't bother; you won't likely forget Dale Krantz, a salty-sweet belter who can scrape the bottom of gravel-voiced blues, warble like Tracy Nelson, and soar like Grace Slick used to. The Rossington-Collins Band is built around the surviving members of Lynyrd Skynyrd, and even without Krantz it is a good, solid, and definitely Southern (lyrical metal) rock band with a number of good ideas about how to make basically early-Seventies music sound fresh. Toto-and-Foreigner-and-Styx play the same sort of stuff, and you'll be impressed at how much more vital and alive this version of it sounds. But Dale Krantz is going to steal the show. She's a find, and she's what makes this album go. N.C.

SON SEALS: *Chicago Fire.* Son Seals (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Buzzard Luck; Gentleman from the Windy City; Watching Every Move You Make; Landlord at My Door; Nobody Wants a Loser;* and three others. ALLIGATOR AL 4720 \$7.98.

Performance: **Solid**

Recording: **Good**

Son Seals is a rough-and-ready Chicago bluesman whose style owes a lot to B. B. King. But Seals can laugh at himself whereas King insists on his dignity, so Seals is often a lot more fun to hear. Seals also has a sense of community with other Chicago bluesmen—he dearly loves his home town—and that makes him all the more companionable. This album won't kayo the world, but it's solid and enjoyable. J.V.

SEALS & CROFTS: *The Longest Road.* Jim Seals (vocals, saxophone); Dash Crofts (vocals, mandolin); Chick Corea (piano); other musicians. *Stars; Try Your Love; First Love; Kite Dreams; If and Any Day; Egypt, Israel & America;* and four others.

(Continued overleaf)

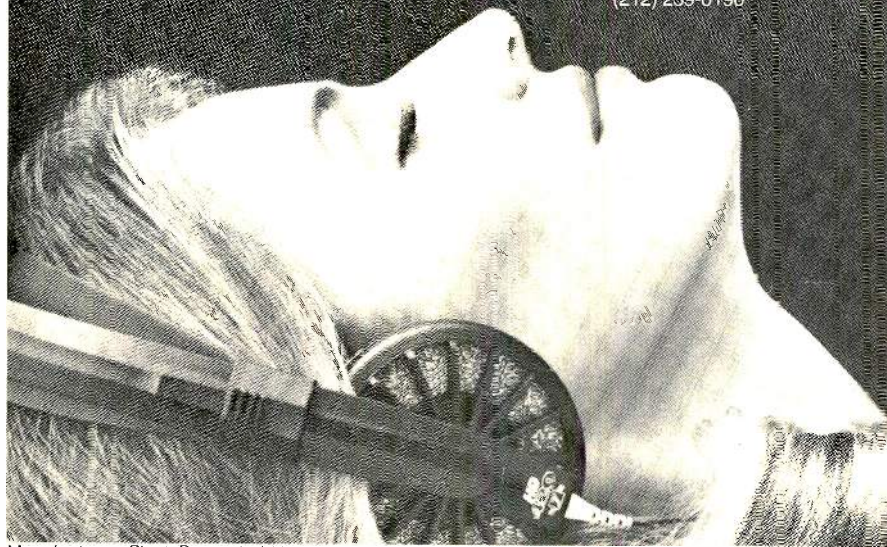
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GUILT is what gives country music its muscle tone. At least it has been so far; the culture that produced the music traditionally taught that anything pleasurable more than likely was evil. That's changing, of course, and country music is having to change with it. This should prove especially hard for that branch known as honky-tonk songs. What's a honky-tonk song going to play against if you take away, or soften, guilt? The problem is illustrated in Lacy J. Dalton's new album, "Hard Times."

Guilt pulled the songs in her first album, "Lacy J. Dalton," as taut as a Hemingway fishing line. "Hard Times," on the other hand, while mentioning the possibility of her going to hell if she doesn't change her ways, mainly deals "rationally" with guilt. That is, it tries to get along without it. All this refers to content only, you understand; some of the attractive tension in her singing style no doubt comes from the old culturally ingrained guilt. Anyway, "Hard Times" may be, consciously or unconsciously, an attempt to power Dalton's own province (which overlaps both honky-tonk and country-rock) on various other fuels. The machinery with which to do that, including that soft machine the body, with all its memory banks and glands, is accustomed to the octane rating of guilt. So the songs in "Hard Times" aren't as well toned-up as those in the first album.

Of course no one else in the last couple of years has topped that album either. Although *Hillbilly Girl with the Blues* and



Darryl Pitt/Retina

Lacy J. Dalton

Taking the Guilt Out of Honky-tonk

Wide Eyed and Willing here lead a small contingent of new contenders, generally Dalton has settled for a little less in a tune than she did last time out (*Wide Eyed and Willing*, with some nice changes, is the exception that makes you notice this). The lyrics get the job done but don't shoot off sparks in the process. The singing and instrumentation, with producer Billy Sherrill again giving her plenty of room, put some of the tension back in and readily reinforce the conviction I have that Dalton is monstrously talented as an interpreter along with being genuinely gifted as a songwriter.

If she succeeds in taking guilt out of the honky-tonk without having the place come crashing down around her, she will have done something. And good riddance, say I. Guilt is a worse-than-useless emotion; it's actually a mean and rotten device for controlling others. But we do need a substitute fuel that's got some zap to it. If the really good ones, such as Lacy J. Dalton, are out exploring, I'm sure something will turn up sooner or later.

—Noel Coppage

LACY J. DALTON: *Hard Times*. Lacy J. Dalton (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Hard Times; Hillbilly Girl with the Blues; China Doll; Old Soldier; Ain't Nobody Who Could Do It Like My Daddy Could; You Can't Fool Love; Wide Eyed and Willing; Kim and I; Whisper; Me 'n' You.* COLUMBIA JC 36763 \$7.98, © JCA 36763 \$7.98, © JCT 36763 \$7.98.

WARNER BROS. BSK 3365 \$7.98, © M8 3365 \$7.98, © M5 3365 \$7.98.

Performance: **Weak script**
Recording: **Excellent**

This album is lovingly produced and meticulously engineered. Moreover, it has special guest Chick Corea, no less, playing some fairly dazzling lines on the first cut to kick things off. The inevitable question is, if they cared so much about it, why didn't they write some decent songs for it? By "they" I mean Jim Seals and his various collaborators, who have here come up with mostly sketchy lightweights. Take Corea's piano and Seals' sax out of *Stars* and there isn't much left; the next song, played differently, might qualify as mediocre disco. And so it goes. Under all the decoration there's not much in the way of words or melodies that's very engrossing. *Kite Dreams* stands a little above the others, actually having some lyrical reason for existing. *Egypt, Israel & America* and *One Planet, One People, Please* both try to get out of the moon-June murk, but each is in its own way maudlin and slightly embarrassing. There are some nice effects here, and some hard-won vocal and instrumental textures, but the album is basically flat and tuneless.

N.C.

SILICON TEENS: *Music for Parties*. Silicon Teens (vocals and instrumentals). *Memphis; Yesterday Man; Doo Wah Diddy Diddy; TV Playtime; Red River Rock; Let's Dance; State of Shock (Part Two);*

and seven others. SIRE SRK 6092 \$7.98, © M5S 6092 \$7.98.

Performance: **Kid stuff**
Recording: **Very good**

There's an album in the stores called *Chipmunk Punk* in which teeny-tiny voices—created by tape-dubbing tricks—sing hot contemporary rock numbers. This album by the Silicon Teens, four high-school kids from Liverpool with monotone voices and synthesizers, is equally thrilling. Among the fourteen selections they manage to debilitate are great songs made famous by Chuck Berry, Ray Davies, Buddy Holly, Manfred Mann, and others. The album is supposed to be cute and precocious and punky, but it is merely wretchedly infantile.

J.V.

THE SINGERS UNLIMITED: *A Special Blend*. The Singers Unlimited (vocals); orchestra. *Gotcha; Mood Indigo; Round Midnight; Born to Be Blue;* and five others. PAUSA PR 7062 \$7.98.

ART VAN DAMME AND THE SINGERS UNLIMITED: *Invitation*. The Singers Unlimited (vocals); Art van Damme Quintet (instrumentals). *Cherry; But Beautiful; Spring Is Here; Invitation; Ecstasy;* and six others. PAUSA PR 7066 \$7.98.

Performances: **Elaborate**
Recordings: **Heavy**

By means of overdubbing and elaborate arrangements, the four vocalists who make up

the Singers Unlimited—Bonnie Herman, Don Shelton, Len Dresslar, and Gene Puerling—are made to sound like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. The application of all this elephantine sound and fury to such fragile songs as *Cherry* and *Violets for Your Furs* is as pointless as chasing butterflies with a baseball bat. The complex arrangements are by Gene Puerling, the thunderous production by Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer. *Schwer* indeed.

P.R.

SNIFF 'N' THE TEARS: *The Game's Up*. Sniff 'n' the Tears (vocals and instrumentals). *What Can Daddy Do; Poison Pen Mail; Moment of Weakness; The Game's Up; If I Knew Then;* and four others. ATLANTIC SD 19272 \$7.98, © TP 19272 \$7.98, © CS 19272 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Very good**

This album is certainly a turnabout for a band that only a year ago was busily imitating the sounds of every hit British and American group of the past decade and made it to the charts with *Driver's Seat*, a calculated romp 'em, stomp 'em single. Now the band has apparently fallen into deepest gloom. The songs are all low-key, softly sung, gently played, and full of despair. The plots deal with the utter failure of romance, psychotic women, male paranoia, emotional sterility, and all that stuff. But the sentiments sound genuine, the music is unforced, and if you're able to deal

with the spiritual murk you'll find this a rather cohesive and impressive effort. *J.V.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SPINNERS: *Love Trippin'*. Spinners (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Love Trippin'*; *Heavy on the Sunshine*; *Cupid/I've Loved You for a Long Time*; *I Just Want to Be with You*; *Streetwise*; *I Just Want to Fall in Love*; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 19270 \$7.98, © TP 19270 \$7.98, © CS 19270 \$7.98.

Performance: **Worth shouting about**
Recording: **Good**

Someone must have given the Spinners a shot of adrenaline (or a similar revivifying substance), for this album has a heartiness and sense of authority that have been lacking on their recent recordings. The Spinners once led the r-&-b pack, but lately they have been indifferently trudging through sound-alike songs like dogs trained to a familiar route. Perhaps the change here is due to nothing more mysterious than the deft hand of Michael Zager as producer, arranger, and conductor, though a lot of credit should also go to John Edwards for his dazzling lead vocals on at least half the selections. Not since the long-departed Felipe Wynne has a Spinner lead had enough driving force to prod the group into performing at its peak capacity. And Edwards has an even better voice than Wynne, which lets him reach up to pluck a high note without sweating or grunting.

There's nothing really different about the basic style here: seasoned r-&-b group singing punctuated by fervant solos, with a few old-fashioned doo-wops thrown in for good measure. It's just done so much better than the Spinners have been able to manage for a long time. Some of the songs themselves hark back to better times, such as *Now That You're Mine Again*, a new number by Zager that sounds as if it were lifted from a Sixties vault, and a medley of Zager's *I've Loved You for a Long Time* and the late Sam Cooke's *Cupid*, the latter done in a startling imitation of Cooke's singing style. Almost all the other items here are sufficiently sturdy to place them in the running for the charts. As a longtime fan of this group, I'm delighted to see them take a turn for the better. *P.G.*

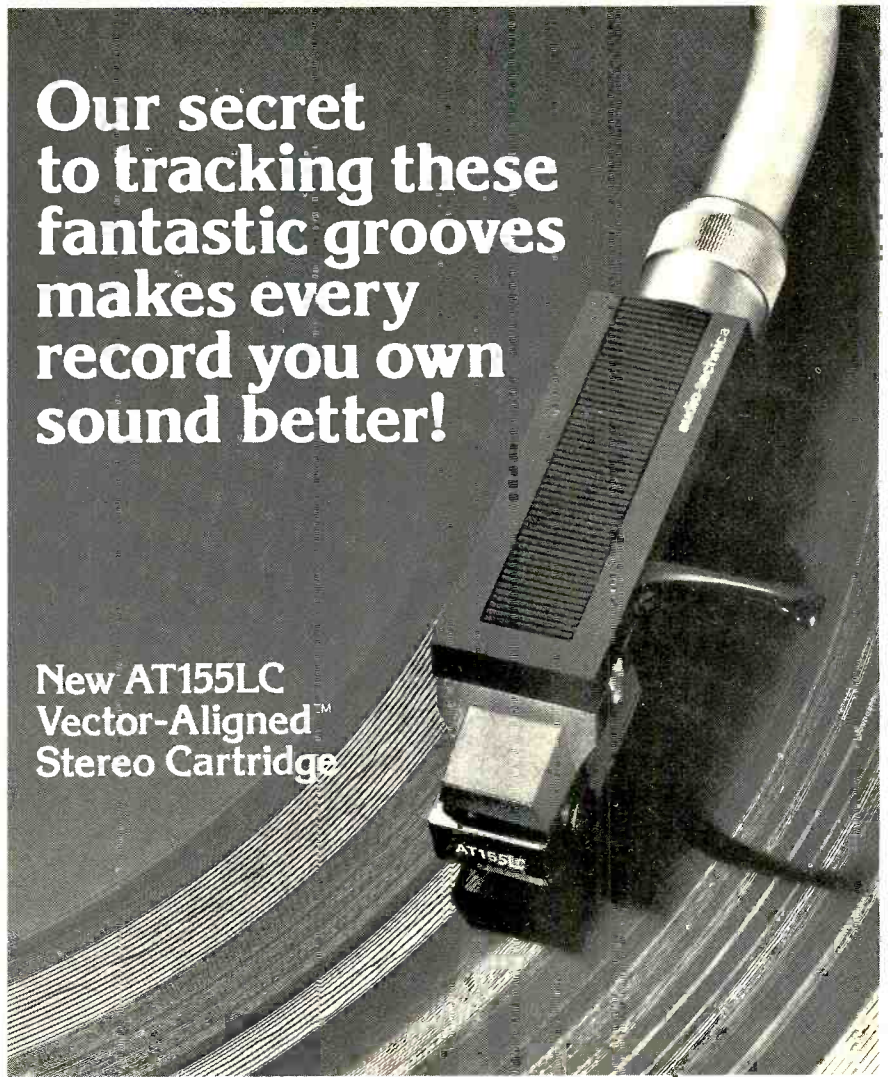
CANDI STATON. Candi Staton (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Looking for Love*; *Halfway to Heaven*; *If You Feel the Need*; *The Hunter Gets Captured by the Game*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3428 \$7.98, © M8 3428 \$7.98, © M5 3428 \$7.98.

Performance: **Held back**
Recording: **Good**

Although Candi Staton's albums are usually easy on the ear, I find it difficult to remember them. She has a good voice, but it lacks any distinctive tonal quality, and her material is rarely first-rate. This new set finds her in a relatively quiet frame of mind, gracefully but unexcitingly wending her way through numbers that sometimes bring on a nod or a snore. She does reach a few peaks, the highest being in the slower-paced *If You Feel the Need*, but I wish she had let go more; she is at her best when she breaks

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into full-throated gospel-type shouting. This album is not an utter dog, but it does bark a bit.

GARY STEWART: Cactus and a Rose. Gary Stewart (vocals, piano, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Okeechobee Purple; Cactus and a Rose; Staring Each Other Down; Lover's Knot; Ghost Train; Roarin'; and four others. RCA AHL1-3627 \$7.98, © AHS1-3627 \$7.98, © AHK1-3627 \$7.98.

Performance: Crowded
Recording: Good but opaque

Producer Chips Moman is better than most at marshaling his forces, but here there are so many forces shuttling in and out—nineteen instrumentalists and several back-up singers—that the focus seems to go fuzzy. Gary Stewart is a rather personal and intense performer, so this is not what you want to happen. Big-name guests include Gregg Allman, Dickey Betts, and Gary Scruggs, and they're even more lost in the crowd than Stewart is.

A TASTE OF HONEY: Twice As Sweet. A Taste of Honey (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Rescue Me; Superstar Superman; She's a Dancer; Goodbye Baby; Say That You'll Stay; and four others. CAPITOL ST-12098 \$7.98, © 8XT-12098 \$7.98, © 4XT-12098 \$7.98.

Performance: Bee-minus
Recording: Fine

The production on this album has driven all the grace and subtlety out of what I had come to enjoy as one of pop music's important new acts. Hazel Payne and Janice Johnson, who make up A Taste of Honey, have made gorgeous music in the past. They are lovely vocalists, capable of true wit and exquisite harmonies even when singing disco hits like Boogie, Oogie, Oogie, and they are also accomplished players on guitar and bass.

But every track in this new offering thumps maddeningly. The reverberation is so severe that the stars are without presence. Worse, not one song gets off the ground. Unlike their previous releases, most of this album is dance tempo. The only cut that comes close to being fully satisfying is I'm Talkin' Bout You, especially in the hushed "lover" refrain sung against a good, jazzy horn solo.

The Nut's Off the Screw; Tell It Like It Is; and three others. COLUMBIA/TAPPAN ZEE JC 36380 \$7.98, © JCA 36380 \$7.98, © JCT 36380 \$7.98.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Excellent

Richard Tee has a rollicking, Rabelaisian good time on this second solo outing, and his enjoyment is infectious. Tee is backed by some of his companions from Stuff along with some notable freelancers, such as saxophonist Tom Scott and the redoubtable Hugh McCracken, who is one of the busiest session guitarists in New York but whose "holiday" instrument is the harmonica. Produced by Bob James for his Tappan Zee label, the album moves ingratiatingly through amalgams of pop, jazz, disco, and funk.



RICHARD TEE
A rollicking, Rabelaisian good time

ing-buddy vocals punctuated by guffaws and spoken asides.

Among other delights there's Tell It Like It Is, a flexible, enjoyable reworking of the 1969 Aaron Neville hit; a teasing version of Willie Dixon's Back Door Man, a sexy blues made famous by Howlin' Wolf in the 1950s; and The Nut's Off the Screw, written by Tee and Bill Withers (this cut is especially heartening for the return of Withers' fine sense of humor).

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS: Just Like That. Toots and the Maytals (vocals and instrumentals). Let's Get It Together; Chatty Chatty; Gee Wiz, Just Like That; and six others. MANGO MLPS 9590 \$7.98.

Performance: Jamaican soul
Recording: Good

While reggae seems to be receding in popularity, the charm of Toots and the Maytals

remains undiminished. This is music that has not been compromised by slickness or easy embellishments. The magic is in the singing and playing of Toots Hibbert and his cohorts, who draw their inspiration from traditional Jamaican ska tempered with black American blues, gospel, and r-&-b. It is all but impossible to listen to Toots without thinking of Otis Redding, so similar is the timbre of his voice and the flow of his phrasing, though Hibbert's music equally reflects the rich musical heritage of his own nation. If you want confirmation, just listen to his inspired solo on *Just Like That* or the way he plays with the lyrics on *Chatty Chatty*. As Toots and the Maytals have said, "Reggae Got Soul," especially when it's coming from them. P.G.

TRUSSEL: Love Injection. Trussel (vocals and instrumentals). *Love Injection; Sweet Love; Big City Rocker; Yearning for Your Love*; and three others. ELEKTRA 6E-272 \$7.98, © ET8-272 \$7.98, © TC5-272 \$7.98.

Performance: **Macho men**
Recording: **Fine**

Music Philadelphia style! Right now, that means a marriage of funk, with its potential lawlessness and overt sexuality, with the civilizing effects of lush romanticism. In Trussel's debut album, both *Gone for the Weekend* and the big disco success *Love Injection* are in the macho mode. And they both really work. But the eight-man group can get even tougher, and on *I Love It* and the brassy *Big City Rocker* they certainly do. The beat is still there, though only *Love Injection* can be labeled traditional disco, but the vocal delivery is more ambitious and the instrumental work heavier. Trussel can turn on the soul too: *Sweet Love* is unabashed melodrama, powerful and drenched in feeling. In sum, this is a better-than-average batch of new songs by a better-than-average group. Ushered onto the charts by the dance mania, Trussel seems to have the resources to stay there in its aftermath. I.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MARGARET WHITING: Too Marvelous for Words. Margaret Whiting (vocals); Loonis McGlohn (piano); Terry Lassiter (bass); Jim Lackey (drums). *Guilty; My Ideal; Sleepy Time Gal; Something's Got to Give; I Remember You*; and eleven others. AUDIOPHILE AP-152 \$7.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Very good**

Margaret Whiting was born into and grew up in the Hollywood pop-music establishment. Her father was Richard Whiting, and the first side of this album is given to performances of his songs, the caliber of which is probably best described by simply listing some of the titles: *My Ideal, Sleepy Time Gal, She's Funny That Way*, and, of course, *Too Marvelous for Words*. The second side is devoted to Johnny Mercer's work. Mercer was also one of the best film songwriters, and a medley of four of his hits—*One for My Baby, Blues in the Night, Day In, Day Out*, and *I Remember You*—provides Miss Whiting with a nearly nine-minute showstopper. It all proves that her voice is still in

as remarkably fine shape as when she was riding the tops of the charts with one hit after another in the late Forties, that her phrasing is now in the Sinatra category, and that she's the kind of musician songwriters dream about. P.R.

CRIS WILLIAMSON: Strange Paradise. Cris Williamson (vocals, guitar, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Strange Paradise; Live Wire; Marcy; Twisted Love; Live Dream; Native Dancer*; and four others. OLIVIA LF921 \$6.

Performance: **Not for women only**
Recording: **Passable**

Olivia Records, which has nothing to do with Newton-John or De Havilland or my daughter's cat, calls itself "a national women's recording company." The back-up musicians and engineers and so forth are all women (Bonnie Raitt drops by here to play a little slide guitar on *When Anger Takes the Wheel*). When this sort of thing happens in the publishing industry, I tend to put on my supercilious look—the majority of people in this world are women, but too many "feminist" books make it appear that women are a tiny minority and that womanhood was only recently discovered. (Some of them make it sound like something holy just dug up at Palmyra, New York.) But I'll concede that the record industry is a different matter; the big labels (and many of the fans) don't give female performers what I'd call equal employment opportunities until they're as big as Raitt or Ronstadt.

The saving grace about this recording, Cris Williamson's third for the label, is Williamson herself. She sings with a nice, clear, accurate voice and tries, at least, to write real songs and not tracts. Her songs here do tend to sound too much alike, and her lyrics make the mistake of chasing insight—content—at the expense of form. There's usually the germ of an idea, or feeling, or something, but not enough insistence on finding the precise word to convey it. The back-up, leaning on "civilized" synthesizers, also seems a bit thin. But the title song and a couple of others are quite nice, and the male eardrum can handle them. Take my word. N.C.

TAMMY WYNETTE: Only Lonely Sometimes. Tammy Wynette (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *He Was There (When I Needed You); You Never Know; Come with Me; You Needed Me; Starting Over*; and five others. EPIC JE 36485 \$7.98, © JEA 36485 \$7.98, © JET 36485 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Good**

Tammy Wynette continues to refine her vocals and Billy Sherrill continues to refine what goes on behind her, but a new Wynette record still largely comes down to what songs they've uncovered. The ones here are mostly quiet and calm, pleasant but not memorable. The best thing about this album is the interplay between voice and instruments, with the guitarists particularly contributing quietly spectacular effects comfortably this side of good taste. The voice is further refined but still idiomatic and authentic. N.C.

(Continued overleaf)

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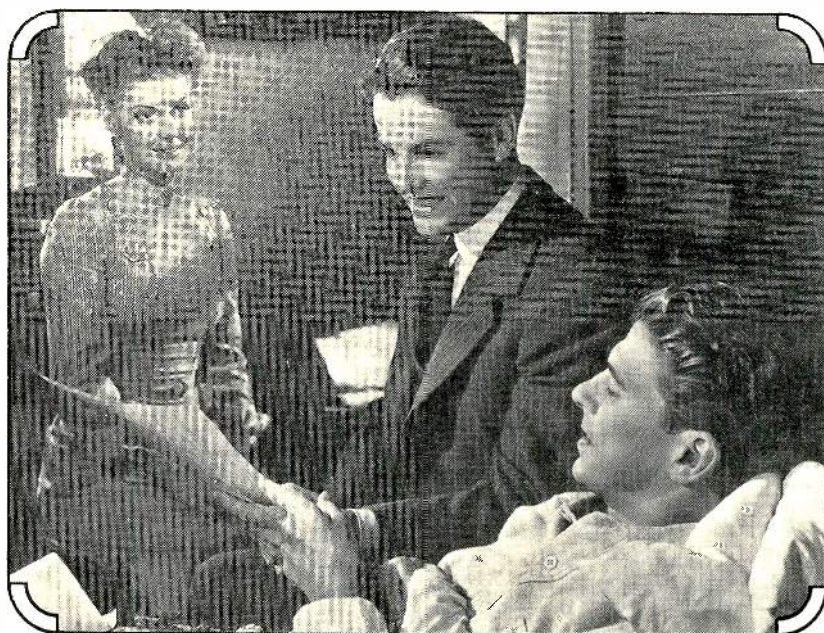
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Movie Soundtracks: How to and How not to

KINGS ROW: Ann Sheridan, Robert Cummings, and friend



Movie Star News

THE fallout from the great movie-soundtrack eruption triggered by the resounding success of the already vaguely quaint *Saturday Night Fever* music shows no sign of abating. As I write, there are six hit soundtrack LPs in the Top 40, and the record/film conglomerates have several waiting in the wings. What's interesting to me about this is that of them all, only one—John Williams' score for *The Empire Strikes Back*—is representative of the "classic" movie-music tradition, the Late Romantic approach of the Newmans and the Steiners that was *de rigueur* for films in the Thirties and Forties. The rest are merely high-gloss pop anthologies running the gamut from country (*Urban Cowboy*) to FM rock and disco (*Fame*, *Xanadu*) to MOR rock (*The Rose*) to r-&-b (*The Blues Brothers*). These days, it seems, if you write for a symphony orchestra, it had better be as background for a space opera.

The move away from the symphonic in film music is a fairly recent one. Big-band jazz scoring (Mancini *et al.*) had some little movie vogue in the Fifties and early Sixties, but the real death knell of the old tradition wasn't sounded until Simon and Garfunkel's 1966 *The Graduate*; after that it was eleven years before an orchestral score (*Star Wars*, of course) dented the charts. Still, nature (not to mention the film nut) abhors a vacuum, and during the dry spell the buffs who frequent revival houses, start historical societies, and write "film" criticism for weekly tabloids began agitating for a reassessment of the work of the earlier Hollywood masters. Consequently, London, RCA, and a variety of newer independent labels began resurrecting their best efforts. By the middle Seventies, the climate had become such that the late Bernard Herrman's score for *Obsession* got almost as much publicity as the movie itself.

Two new recordings before me now provide a fascinating example of these contrasting schools of film scoring. The first,

Jeff Wayne's mainstream rock efforts for *McVicar*, a prison epic starring the Who's Roger Daltrey, seems inappropriate at best and depressingly overblown at worst. The second, Erich Wolfgang Korngold's sweepingly romantic score for *Kings Row*, a Warner Brothers vehicle from the Forties, is memorable both for its intrinsic musical merits and the state-of-the-art recording lavished on it. There's a moral to be drawn from that, but I'd prefer not to be the one to do it.

THE novel *Kings Row*, a story of dark secrets hidden behind the starchy facade of small-town American life, was a sort of *Peyton Place* of its day, and the film version, though cleaned up considerably to meet the censor's approval, was steamy and realistic enough to have built a deserved cult over the years. I saw it for the first time this summer, and (despite the unsettling experience of watching the man who may be our next President joyriding around with two local bad girls) I found it an absorbing, beautifully made little melodrama with the kind of ensemble acting that the collapse of the studio system has rendered increasingly rare; even the tiniest bit parts ring unerringly true. Korngold's score for all this is, to put it simply, a corker, a lush, melodic tapestry that suggests a truly American character without ever partaking of the ersatz-Copland Marlboro Country stylings of an Elmer Bernstein or a Jerome Moross. The main title (which Korngold wrote without knowing the story line, and which has much in common with Williams' *Star Wars* and *Superman* themes) is of course the high point everyone remembers, but the rest is tuneful, effective in its delineation of character, beautifully scored, and in general absorbing even without the visuals. The National Philharmonic under Charles Gerhardt does it all up with gusto, and Chalfont's digital recording is one of the most impressive I've yet heard in the new tech-

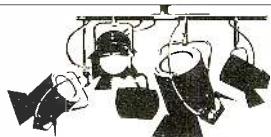
nology, so transparent it becomes almost unsettling. Somehow, I'm not used to having old-style Hollywood grandeur emanating in all its glory from one end of my living room, but this is the music I'm going to want to hear on my videodisc version of *Kings Row* anyway.

McVicar, I'm sorry to report, is nowhere near as memorable; in fact, we've gone from almost sublime to definitely ridiculous. Jeff Wayne, who earlier gave us such howlers as a rock *War of the Worlds* starring Richard Burton, is, to put it kindly, a nose-to-the-ground hack, and his approach here is literal to the point of absurdity. The film, supposedly a realistic look at crime and punishment at the lower end of the British class system, would seem to cry out for music as stark and despairing as the characters themselves, but instead we get a faceless, high-octane rock band (featuring such notables as the Who's rhythm section) blasting out banal songs that sound, at their best, like Foreigner outtakes.

I HAVEN'T seen *McVicar*; advance reports suggest it's a gritty, truthful film, maybe even an important one. It wouldn't surprise me at all if, by contemporary performance standards, it was worlds better dramatically than the already somewhat dated *Kings Row*. But between the musical scores for the two, there's just no contest: given a choice between rote, unfeeling rock-and-roll bombast and glorious classical kitsch, I'll take the kitsch any day. —Steve Simels

KINGS ROW (Erich Wolfgang Korngold). National Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Gerhardt cond. CHALFONT ● SDG 305 \$15.

McVICAR (Jeff Wayne). Original-soundtrack recording. Roger Daltrey (vocals); other musicians. POLYDOR PD-1-6284 \$7.98, © '8T-1-6284 \$7.98, © CT-1-6284 \$7.98.



THEATER • FILMS

THE BANDWAGON (Arthur Schwartz-Howard Dietz). Fred and Adele Astaire, Clifford Mollinson, Jean Collin (vocals); Leo Reisman and His Orchestra. SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION Ⓜ R-021 \$7.99 (plus \$1.89 postage and handling charge from the Smithsonian Collection, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336).

Performance: **Fizzes and floats**
Recording: **Good restoration**

FUNNY FACE (George and Ira Gershwin). Fred and Adele Astaire, Bernard Clifton, Leslie Henson, Sidney Howard (vocals); George Gershwin, Victor Arden, Phil Ohman (piano); various vocal groups and orchestras. SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION Ⓜ R-019 \$7.99 (plus \$1.89 postage and handling charge from the Smithsonian Collection, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336).

Performance: **Skillful**
Recording: **Good**

The Smithsonian Institution's American Musical Theater series aims "to research, reassemble, and offer to contemporary listeners the songs and sounds of the American musical theater from all eras of its history," a worthy cause indeed. In the case of *The Bandwagon*, full of marvelous songs by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz, the researchers and reassemblers were especially fortunate since they were able to turn to one of Victor's Thirties experiments with an LP record. In the "archival reconstruction" of this 1931 Broadway musical revue, we are privileged to hear Fred Astaire and his sister Adele in such legendary numbers as *New Sun in the Sky*, *I Love Louisa*, and *Hoops*. Nobody sings *Dancing in the Dark*, alas, but Leo Reisman and His Orchestra play it dreamily. In all, a generous sample of an imperishable score.

The archivists have not fared quite so well with the Gershwins' *Funny Face*, a 1927 hit with a thin plot about three couples and a jewel robbery but containing such hardy perennials as 'S *Wonderful*, *My One and Only*, *He Loves and She Loves*, and the charming title song. The program is drawn largely from an old Monmouth-Evergreen release put together from recordings made during the show's London run, and it's rather a grab-bag. Again the Astaires are heard, together and separately, accompanied by various orchestras, but the highlight is George Gershwin himself in a couple of solos. For this one, I wish there were *more* songs and fewer repetitions. *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GERSHWIN RARITIES. Kaye Ballard, David Craig, Nancy Walker, others (vo-

cal); instrumental accompaniment. *Soon*; *Stiff Upper Lip*; *Nightie-Night*; *Where's the Boy?*; *My One and Only*; *Shall We Dance*; *I Want to Be a War Bride*; *I Don't Think I'll Fall in Love Today*; and six others. CITADEL CT 7017 \$8.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Good enough**

"Gershwin Rarities" is a fine reissue of recordings made between 1952 and 1954 and originally issued on the Walden label. This is minor Gershwin—if there is such a thing—comprising rarely heard songs from shows and films. *Soon*, admirably sung here by Kaye Ballard, is probably the best known. Nancy Walker appears only once (along with her real-life husband, David Craig), in the wise and witty *I Don't Think I'll Fall in Love Today*. She is, of course, terrific. Louise Carlyle, Betty Gillett, and Warren Galjour handle most of the rest of the material with the kind of snappy dash that used to distinguish American musical comedy before it started taking itself so seriously. George Gershwin is one of our true greats, and this album is a must for anyone interested in him or in twentieth-century American music. *P.R.*

MARY MARTIN: On Broadway. Mary Martin (vocals); orchestra. *Maybe*; *But Not for Me*; *Where or When*; *A Foggy Day*; *High and Low*; and seven others. ENCORE Ⓜ P 14282 \$7.98.

Performance: **Studied**
Recording: **Good**

Mary Martin's semi-retirement has yet to inspire any fresh reappraisals of her work, and she is remembered mainly from others' memoirs and the rather stiff and posed-looking stills from her biggest hits. Agnes de Mille said of her, "She's a great learner," and left it at that. Mary Martin was, however, from the postwar years through the mid-Sixties, one of our greatest legit musical stars. Recordings have never, perhaps with the exception of Columbia's original-cast *South Pacific*, shown the reasons why. In my opinion it was her very American, down-home (Texas) warmth and vitality, combined with a flirtatious naïveté, that kept her a star for so long. Her meticulous rehearsal of every note she sang never interfered with the trusting belief she inspired.

The recordings here, dating from the peak years of her fame, 1949-1951, unfortunately seem to reflect only Martin's perfectionism and little of her bubbling spirit. Studio-made, they are elaborate and rather stuffy tributes to some of our great composers. She sings such standards as Gershwin's *Maybe*, Rodgers and Hart's *Where or When*, and Berlin's *It's a Lovely Day Tomorrow* as one would expect a Great Star to sing them: immaculately, reverently, and dramatically. Thirty years ago it might have sufficed; today it doesn't. It is no help at all that she chose to iron every personal characteristic out of her performances as carefully as she possibly could. Even her famous Texas twang—which slipped out so delightfully in live performance, much against the obvious will of its possessor—is totally muted here into Theatuh Dikshun. *Sic transit*, etc. *P.R.*

(Continued overleaf)

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JAZZ



LOUIS ARMSTRONG: *Louis Armstrong's All Stars*. Louis Armstrong (trumpet, vocals); Jewell Brown (vocals); Trummy Young (trombone); Joe Darensbourg (clarinet); Billy Kyle (piano); Billy Cronk (bass); Danny Barcelona (drums). *When It's Sleepy Time Down South; Now You Has Jazz; New Orleans Function; C'est Si Bon; Someday*; and four others. STORYVILLE SLP-4012 \$7.98.

Performance: **Remarkable**
Recording: **Adequate**

This collection of studio and live recordings from 1961-1962 features Louis Armstrong more as a vocalist than as a trumpeter. Of course, there was no one like him in either category, and although his playing was somewhat routine at that stage in his career his horn still had more zap than anyone else's either before or since.

The best cut here is *New Orleans Function*, which conveys the sound and mood of

a New Orleans funeral procession at the time young Armstrong was playing in parade bands. It is a medley that begins with the gorgeous traditional hymn *Flee As a Bird to the Mountain*, played with all solemnity as it might have been on the way to the graveyard, followed by the equally traditional tune for the trip back, *Didn't He Ramble*, in which the band swings out to warm everybody up for the party afterwards. Armstrong's spoken narration here is a definitive example of his down-to-earth humor and crowd-pleasing sense, and his playing is remarkable for this late date. The tone is majestic, the control perfect; he is literally playing "parade horn" from direct experience. And when the band takes off with *Didn't He Ramble* his playing is awesomely exuberant.

Armstrong is not the featured performer on every cut, and there are far too many pops and scratches on my review copy. These complaints aside, though, this is a valuable memento of a unique career. *J.V.*

BOLLING: *Picnic Suite* (see *Classical Discs and Tapes*, page 86)

BRAND X: *Do They Hurt?* Brand X (vocals and instrumentals). *Noddy Goes to Sweden; Act of Will; Fragile*; and four others. PASSPORT PB 9845 \$7.98.

Performance: **Solemnly silly**
Recording: **Very good**

Brand X is one of those bright British groups that hope to make musical gold from

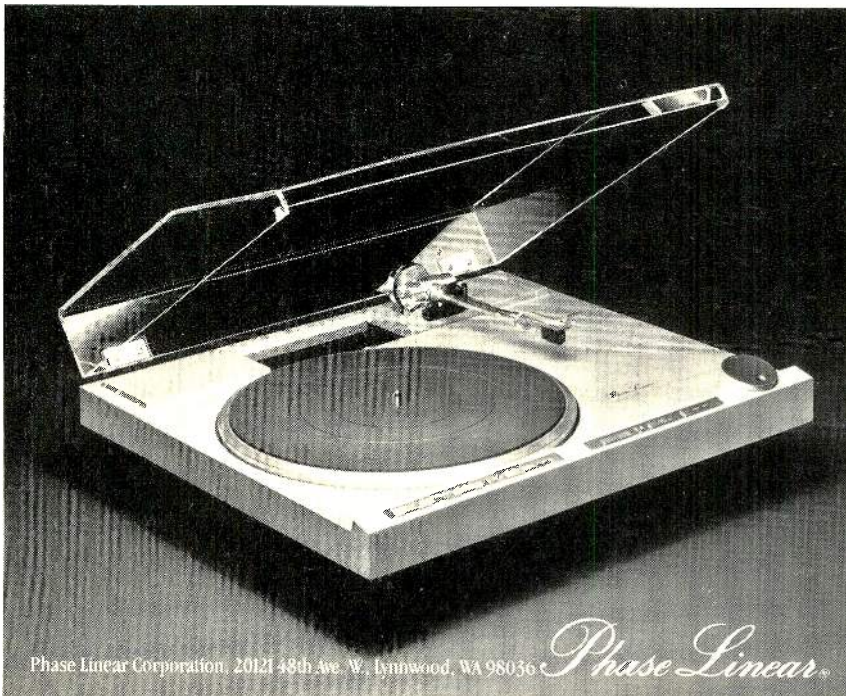
the alchemy of combining the sound of rock with the sound of jazz. Money they have made; music is something else again. Despite some arresting percussion passages from drummer Phil Collins, formerly of Genesis, Brand X relies far too much on technical tricks and special effects and far too little on musical substance. The boys in this band are busy fellows, and no doubt clever ones, but they haven't found a musical style to say whatever is on their minds—which, I began to suspect about halfway through "Do They Hurt?," may not be much after all. *P.K.*

THE BRECKER BROTHERS: *Detente*. Michael Brecker (tenor saxophone, flute); Randy Brecker (trumpet, flugelhorn); Airtio (percussion); D. J. Rogers, Carl Cartwell (vocals); other musicians. *You Ga (Ta Give It); Not Tonight; Don't Get Funny with My Money; Tee'd Off; You Left Something Behind*; and four others. ARISTA AB 4272 \$7.98, © AT8 4272 \$7.98, © ATC 4272 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fusion funk**
Recording: **Good**

From time to time, the Brecker Brothers take a break from playing back-up for other musicians to head their own show. Their varied experience gives them a foot in many different musical camps from which they borrow freely for their own albums. Although they have previously explored jazz fusion with considerable success, the present album is decidedly funkier, with vocals

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supplied mostly by D. J. Rogers plus a few by Carl Cartwell. On these tracks the Breckers again relegate themselves to the background, providing the same snappy little licks we've heard on sets they've recorded with other artists. Unfortunately, when they take the spotlight their solos still sound like back-ups, without enough imagination or improvisational fire to be first-rate music. Only on *Dream Theme* does Michael Brecker give us an inkling of his true ability on tenor sax, which is a shame, for he can do just about anything he wants to on this horn of horns and can perform on a masterly level when he's inspired to try.

P.G.

BETTY CARTER: *Social Call*. Betty Carter (vocals); Ray Bryant, Hank Jones (piano); Jerome Richardson (flute); Osie Johnson, Philly Joe Jones (drums). *Thou Swell*; *I Could Write a Book*; *Can't We Be Friends*; *Frenesi*; *The Way You Look Tonight*; *Tell Him I Said Hello*; and five others. COLUMBIA JC 36425 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very sassy**
Recording: **Good**

It has become quite fashionable lately to drool over Betty Carter's every inflection, cast a blank look into space, and wonder aloud why her artistry is largely ignored by both the public and the media. Actually, I don't find it so hard to understand; her work in recent years has been a harsh, strenuous exaggeration of what is commonly considered to be soulfulness. What I hear Betty Carter do these days does not have the ring of truth about it.

However, when the recordings in "Social Call" were made in the mid-Fifties, Carter sang rather like Sarah Vaughan, with an occasional nod in the direction of Anita O'Day, and for me they are far more palatable than anything I have heard her do in recent years. In fact, this is an outstanding collection of jazz vocals. Side one features six selections originally released on an Epic album titled "Meet Betty Carter and Ray Bryant." The accompaniment is by a quartet (actually, the Ray Bryant Trio plus Jerome Richardson), and the arrangements—what little there is of them—are early Quincy Jones. This is also early Ray Bryant, of course, and it reminds us that he was a wonderful accompanist. It's all very Vaughanesque (*Moonlight in Vermont* could easily fool you) and very worthwhile listening.

The second side consists of five selections made with a big Gigi Gryce band a year later, in 1956. For some unexplained reason, these cuts were never previously issued. Here the arrangements play an important role, and Gryce's were written with obvious concern for the budding singer. The band includes top studio men of the day, and it must have been a great disappointment to Miss Carter for the session to be buried in Columbia's vault. Twenty-five years is a long time as the evolution of jazz goes, but this album does not sound dated; it helps explain why Betty Carter never really emerged center stage (Sarah Vaughan was already there), but as it enlightens it also entertains. Betty Carter, of course, later got away from the Vaughan style, and for a while she was extraordinary, but near perfection turned to near parody.

C.A.

EDDIE CONDON: *The Liederkrantz Sessions*. Max Kaminsky (cornet); Marty Marsala (trumpet); Pee Wee Russell (clarinet); Brad Gowans, George Brunis (trombone); Fats Waller, Joe Bushkin (piano); Eddie Condon (guitar); Artie Shapiro (bass); George Wettling (drums). *I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None of My Jelly Roll* (two takes); *Strut Miss Lizzie* (two takes); *It's Right Here for You* (two takes); *Georgia Grind* (two takes); *Oh, Sister Ain't That Hot* (two takes); and five others. COMMODORE XFL 15355 \$8.98.

Performance: **Hot and classic**
Recording: **Good restoration**

The Commodore sessions have been understandably prized by jazz aficionados for close to forty years. Milt Gabler, owner of the Commodore jazz record shop, was a perfect match for Eddie Condon, guitarist and jazz booker. Gabler wanted to provide a relaxed setting where musicians could play at their best; Condon wanted gigs to keep his fellow musicians alive.

The sessions here, recorded at Liederkrantz Hall in 1939 and 1940, featured pianists Joe Bushkin and Fats Waller, respectively, and the reissue includes all the alternative takes. The songs are sturdy melodies from the Twenties that have nothing "period" about them; Condon and his crowd knew what a good tune was and how to use it as a platform for improvisation.

Bushkin had a light touch and elegant ideas (like Teddy Wilson); he could play rough or tender or a mixture of both—and that mixture was what the Condon sessions were all about. The Fats Waller sides are, of course, as special a treat for the listener as they were for the musicians. Waller's Victor contract compelled him to record wishy-washy pop tunes and to devote much of his time to singing and clowning. Masquerading under the name of his son Maurice, on Condon's date Fats could concentrate strictly on the keyboard. Cornetist Max Kaminsky and trumpeter Marty Marsala were yeoman horns with fine flashes in their solos, although they sound more comfortable in ensemble roles. On trombone, Brad Gowans shows a stately sense of melody and George Brunis is forceful, but I can't help wishing that Jack Teagarden had been available. Pee Wee Russell was on both dates, and he has to be in anybody's book of first-rate clarinetists. His ideas were agile and fluent, and his tone had a slight burr that contributes a delightful rough edge to his smooth thinking. And bassist Artie Shapiro and drummer George Wettling were both topflight veterans.

Eddie Condon is remembered as a promoter, good-timer, jazz proselytizer, and wit, but as a musician he held very conservative ideas about his function. He never soiled. He devoutly believed in supporting the frontline horns. As recording techniques improved in the Fifties and his playing became more audible, it became possible to hear more clearly what an asset he was—the way he propelled a band, the way he kept the excitement alive, as he obviously did on these classic sessions.

J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HELEN HUMES: *Let the Good Times Roll*. Helen Humes (vocals); Arnett Cobb

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BROADWAY musicals these days might easily be mistaken for exhibits in the Museum of Natural History further uptown. On one side we have a lineup of carefully restored behemoths of the past: *West Side Story*, *Camelot*, *Oklahoma*, *Peter Pan*. On the other are more recent levitahans: *Barnum*, *Annie*, *Sugar Babies*. The productions are all as eye-poppingly big as a brontosaurus—and about as lively. A few months ago, however, this tendency toward

edy in years to offer some adult entertainment (and don't bring up *Sweeney Todd*—if that was a “musical,” then *Oh, Calcutta!* is a Shakespearean tragedy).

The show falls into two loosely connected parts. *A Day in Hollywood*, part one of an evening's delight, is a free-form song-and-dance tribute to the only Hollywood worth remembering: the one of Marlene, Judy, Mickey, and Minnie. The cast takes turns being brilliant. For instance, in *Nelson Peg-*

Fun, *Sleepy Time Gal*, and *Beyond the Blue Horizon*—the last a song that always amazes me when it's sung straight, as it is here, because it makes me want to laugh and cry at the same time. And in another Jerry Herman song, *The Best in the World*, Priscilla Lopez is nothing short of galvanic as a starlet who's already been discarded but is still trying to salvage whatever shreds of self-respect she can.

As good as the solo numbers and the Whiting medley are, however, it was the production numbers—*Just Go to the Movies*, *I Love a Film Cliché*, *Doin' the Production Code*, and, most especially, *Famous Feet*—that conquered me totally and had me playing the album over and over again. If you can resist the toe-tapping chorus of *Famous Feet*, then you deserve a season pass to the next Max Reger Festival. That the album's producer, Hugh Fordin, was able to whip up this much excitement and genuine Broadway spirit from a tiny (eight-piece) instrumental ensemble and only eight singers (and without, of course, the highly acclaimed choreography and direction by Tommy Tune) is a tribute to the kind of theatrical ingenuity that was typical of Broadway before the days of million-dollar sets, million-dollar stars, and million-dollar original-cast recordings.

THE second part of the show, *A Night in the Ukraine*, purports to be Chekhov's play *The Bear* as it might have been adapted for film by the Marx Brothers. Frank Lazarus' music and Dick Vosburgh's book and lyrics are loving parodies of old Marx Brothers movies. *Again*, for instance, is an insistent love song rather like *Alone*, which Allan Jones seemed to sing to Kitty Carlisle at any and every opportunity in *A Night at the Opera*; in *A Night in the Ukraine* the song is hilariously treated as a leitmotif that comes around so often you begin to wish it would just go away. And then there is *Natasha*, a spavined tango like those to which Groucho used to swoop around the floor in the company of that eternally innocent mark, Margaret Dumont. And . . . but you really have to *hear* it; like their models, the minisplendors of this show transcend description.

A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine is the kind of *creative* musical that seldom gets produced any more—and hardly ever gets recorded when it does. (The last thing like it I can remember on records was Al Carmines and Irene Maria Fornos' wonderful *Promenade*, which was released by RCA well over a decade ago.) It is also the kind of show that first attracted me to Broadway many years ago: entertainment created by adults for adults.

—Peter Reilly

A DAY IN HOLLYWOOD/A NIGHT IN THE UKRAINE (Dick Vosburgh-Frank Lazarus-Jerry Herman). Original-Broadway-cast recording. Priscilla Lopez, David Garrison, Frank Lazarus, Stephen James, Peggy Hewett, Kate Draper, Niki Harris, Albert Stephenson (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. DRG SBL 12580 \$9.98, © SBL 12580 \$9.98.



Richard Avedon/DRG Records

A Day in Hollywood A Night in the Ukraine

lumbering gigantism was challenged when a bright, beady-eyed little mouse of a musical improbably called *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine* skittered in from London and settled down for an iconoclastic run. The cheers and raves that greeted this *Less Is More* show and its cast of eight (!) haven't stopped echoing, and the latest and loudest are mine after listening to the DRG recording of the New York production.

Until I heard the album I hadn't realized just how long I'd been waiting for a sweet little show like this to come along. *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine* is as witty as it is unpretentious, as stylish as it is spare, and as irreverent as it is inventive. It is, in fact, the first Broadway musical com-

edy Hewett portrays an ever-so-haughty film prima donna dishing her lumpish co-star: "The lights melt his hairdo/On camera he'll primp/And frankly his hair/Isn't all that goes limp/Darling Nelson/How incredibly boring/That's not singing/That's snoring." It's the funniest song Jerry Herman has written since *Bosom Buddies*, his bit of classic bitchery from *Mame*. Most of the music is by Frank Lazarus, who also acts and sings in the show, most memorably in a wonderfully gritty salute to the too-long-neglected talent and songs of Richard Whiting, *It All Comes Out of the Piano*. This is followed by the entire cast in a medley of Whiting's immortal silver-screen creations, including *Louise*, *Ain't We Got*

(tenor saxophone); Milt Buckner, Jay McShann (keyboards); Al Casey (guitar); other musicians. *My Handy Man; A Million Dollar Secret; That Old Feeling; Ooo Baba Leba; He May Be Your Man*; and five others. CLASSIC JAZZ CJ 120 \$7.98.

Performance: **Youthful as ever**
Recording: **Good**

Helen Humes has been singing into recording microphones since 1927, when Lonnie Johnson provided her with guitar accompaniment on four Okeh sides made in St. Louis. Since then, her instrumental backing on recordings has ranged from the greatest of all the Count Basie orchestras to small jump bands with such notables as Pete Brown, Red Norvo, Dizzy Gillespie, Buck Clayton, Dexter Gordon, and Lester Young. After her successful 1938-1942 tenure with Basie, Miss Humes branched out on her own with a blues shouting style more often associated with male singers. During the latter half of the Forties, she enjoyed enormous popularity belting out lusty, often humorous lyrics on the jazz and r-&-b circuits. Some of the lyrics, the style, and, indeed, the very same voice that thrilled postwar audiences can be heard on "Let the Good Times Roll," an album recorded in France seven years ago. The earthy, organ- and tenor-flavored back-up on most of these selections complements Helen Humes' exuberant style and whistle-clean sound perfectly, but it is only one of many ideal backings for this multifaceted artist. On *My Handy Man* and *Guess Who's in Town*, two Andy Razaf tunes, she is accompanied by piano only, presumably Jay McShann (the personnel varies, but don't go by the listings on the album; they are inaccurate), and her delivery is strongly reminiscent of those 1927 Okeh sides. Helen Humes the superb ballad singer emerges on *That Old Feeling* and *Prisoner of Love*. Blues-shouter Humes is captured on a new version of her old hit *Million Dollar Secret*, and *Ooo Baba Leba*, another hit from her popular past, displays the Humes wit and ebullience at its best.

I am totally in favor of this album's American release, though it is no substitute for the real presence; Helen Humes is still very much with us, singing in a voice and with a spirit unchanged by time. C.A.

STEVE KUHN/SHEILA JORDAN: *Playground*. Sheila Jordan (vocals); Steve Kuhn (piano); Harvie Swartz (bass); Bob Moses (drums). *The Zoo; Tomorrow's Son; Gentle Thoughts*; and three others. ECM ECM-1-1159 \$8.98, © M5E-1159 \$8.98.

Performance: **Well integrated**
Recording: **Excellent**

"Playground" is a collection of modern-day lieder. It is not for the average listener's consumption, not even the average jazz listener's, for it is a delicate, somewhat esoteric synthesis of words and music with amiable rambling structures that beckon the adventurous ear. But even the less adventurous will perceive and appreciate the beauty of Steve Kuhn's piano patterns and such moments as Harvie Swartz's wonderfully agile bass introduction to *Gentle Thoughts*. Kuhn wrote all the songs, including the lyrics—which are literate without being precious—and Sheila Jordan's thin, buoyant

voice is the perfect instrument to express them. C.A.

NEW ORLEANS NIGHTHAWKS. New Orleans Nighthawks (vocals and instrumentals). *Bugle Call Rag; Keepin' Out of Mischief; Casey Jones Blues; You're Driving Me Crazy; The Pay Off; Snag It; Kansas City Kitty*; and six others. G.H.B. GHB-98 \$7.98.

Performance: **Like it used to be**
Recording: **Appropriate**

On 88th Street and Third Avenue in Manhattan there is a place called the Red Blazer Too where time seems to have stood still since the days of Prohibition. If you're lucky enough to arrive on one of the two nights a week when its members turn up, you'll find there a band called the New Orleans Nighthawks. The mastermind of their music is Vince Giordano, who leads the band, plays the tuba, the bass sax, and the string bass, sings the songs, and writes the arrangements and the press releases. Dick Wellstood is likely to be at the piano, Jimmy Maxwell on lead trumpet, Eddy Davis on drums. Vince Fitzpatrick will stand up and croon the lyrics of some golden oldie and then sit down again. There are eleven men in all, and what they play is the kind of jazz you could hear in the nation's speakeasies before the Swing Era came along.

If you want to hear what I mean, get hold of their record. Even the recording's sound has an antique cast to it, as if the disc had been remastered on retired equipment from the early Thirties. Will the New Orleans Nighthawks replace the Moog? Will the disco give way to a back-room bar? According to late reports, an ever-growing sprinkling of teenagers has infiltrated the crowd at the Red Blazer, so who knows? As good old Archie MacLeish once wrote, "The future is a mirror where the past marches to meet itself." P.K.

PROTO: *String Quartet No. 1* (see Classical Discs and Tapes—GINASTERA)

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JESS STACY: *J. Stacy and Friends*. Jess Stacy (piano); Lee Wiley (vocals); Muggsy Spanier (cornet); other musicians. *Ramblin'; Sugar; Ridin' Easy; Blue Fives; The Sell Out; Ec-Stacy*; and ten others. COM-MODORE © XFL 15358 \$8.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Okay**

Jess Stacy was a pianist with several Benny Goodman aggregations during the Thirties and Forties, and this album is a collection of sides he made then, though not with Goodman. Stacy was (is, actually; he's now living in California) a pianist of some subtlety and elegance. He was briefly married to Lee Wiley, and she turns up here singing two of her classics, *Down to Steamboat Tennessee* and *Sugar*, with the cornet assist of Muggsy Spanier. In his time, Stacy was different and perhaps a little too cerebral for the massed, frenetic sounds that swing demanded; today he sounds more interesting than some of the great names from that time. Which is probably why this is a must-have album for all you serious jazz-piano fans. P.R.

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Raymond Ross

Jimmy Rushing: Indispensable

MANY a man has sung jazz, but since the Twenties, when Louis Armstrong wrote the rule book, only a handful of real, honest-to-goodness male jazz singers have emerged. High on the list—possibly second only to Louis himself—is the late Jimmy Rushing, a boulder of a man whose slightly raspy and infectiously rhythmic vocalizing soared above Count Basie's brass and drifted effortlessly alongside his famous reeds in the Basie band's golden years. Rushing's voice was a vital part of the band, but in the late Forties, after a fruitful association that had lasted more than a decade, it was time for "Mister Five by Five" to move on.

When I first met Jimmy Rushing, in 1958, I was both amused and surprised to see on his calling card the words "use me"; somehow it just seemed odd that one could book the great Jimmy Rushing simply by calling him direct at home. But, as I was to discover in the ensuing years, Rushing was as unassuming and straightforward as his music, a man with a passion for jazz history who felt privileged to have witnessed so much of it and almost humble about his own contribution. He worshiped the blues ladies who reigned in the Twenties, and when I told him in 1961 that I was producing a session with Alberta Hunter, Lucille Hegamin, and Victoria Spivey, he asked if he could attend and promised to be "very quiet." His presence was, of course, a compliment to all concerned, and I regret to say that he did indeed remain very quiet except in his praise of the three singers.

A year before attending my session, Jimmy had held his own for Columbia, recording his tribute to the great blues women of the past. Seven selections from that album

("Jimmy Rushing Sings the Smiths," CS 8405) are among the thirty tracks in a new Columbia release, "Mister Five by Five," that is a must for any lover of good jazz. Except for four duets with Helen Humes, a blues belter with whom Rushing worked in the Basie band, all the recordings have appeared on previous Columbia albums. Oddly enough, Jimmy Rushing and Helen Humes never recorded together in the years they shared with Basie (1938-1941), although they often performed individually at the same sessions; the sides premiered here were made in Hollywood, presumably during the Sixties (the reissue producers have omitted all dates), with an engineer who thought it necessary to give Miss Humes some sort of electronic "enhancement," as they like to call it. Her voice sounds harsh and distant as a result, but the presence of Ben Webster makes up for much of that, and the uniqueness of the occasion disarms the critic.

LIRVING TOWNSEND produced some of the sessions represented in this collection, but the Jimmy Rushing he describes in his very personal notes is not the same man I knew for nearly a decade and a half. What you will hear on these two records is, however, a true reflection of his art. With the support of some of the greatest instrumentalists jazz has produced, Rushing hurls his voice into the air, bends and twists each bouncy note, and builds up steam for a final push. Once, when I told him he sounded very much like an instrumentalist, Rushing explained that in his days with the Bennie Moten band he had to use a megaphone in order to be heard, "and I felt like an instrumentalist, because I had my two megaphones—a big

one and a little one—in cases, and just like a sax player chose between his sax and clarinet, I had to decide whether to use one horn or the other." No megaphones on these sides, but plenty of mega-talent. Though not much real thought seems to have gone into organizing this reissue, the material makes it indispensable to any good jazz collection. —Chris Albertson

JIMMY RUSHING: *Mister Five by Five.* Jimmy Rushing (vocals); Helen Humes (vocals, on four selections); various instrumentalists, including Buck Clayton, Doc Cheatham, Emmett Berry (trumpets); Vic Dickenson, Dickie Wells (trombones); Benny Goodman (clarinet); Buddy Tate, Coleman Hawkins, Zoot Sims (saxophones); Nat Pierce, Claude Hopkins (piano); Danny Barker, Everett Barksdale (guitar); Milt Hinton, Walter Page (bass); Jo Jones, Osie Johnson (drums). *Arkansas Blues; Muddy Water; Everybody Loves My Baby (But My Baby Loves Nobody But Me); Shipwrecked Blues; 'Deed I Do; Mister Five by Five; June Night; Gulf Coast Blues; There'll Be Some Changes Made; Trix Ain't Walkin' No More; Brussels Blues; Am I Blue?; Say You Don't Mean It; It's a Sin to Tell a Lie; When You're Smiling; Downhearted Blues; I Can't Believe That You're in Love with Me; One Evening; Jimmy's Blues; Somebody Stole My Gal; I Cried for You (Now It's Your Turn to Cry over Me); Now That I Need You; I'm Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town; My Melancholy Baby; Blues in the Dark; Russian Lullaby; Trouble in Mind; I'm Coming Virginia; Why Oh Why; Are You Ready.* COLUMBIA C2 36419 two discs \$9.98.

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Simels Live

By Steve Simels



John Friedlander/Reina

Southside Johnny at the Ritz dance-rock club in New York City

THE ASBURY JUKES COME HOME (AGAIN)

IN case you hadn't heard, the hottest new band in England right this minute is an outfit called Dexy's Midnight Runners, and what's interesting about them is that they are not punk, New Wave, No Wave, ska, minimalist, or any of the above. What they are, in fact, is a straight Sixties soul band, heavy on Stax/Volt and Motown, horn section and all. I haven't heard their imported debut album yet, but they do have one cut on a recent domestic Stiff sampler, and it's impressive: impassioned playing and singing and a nice period-sounding production job. It's also vaguely political, and I suspect there may be a Specials parallel at work; we shall see. They're going to be rather heavily hyped, and if they connect with a sizable audience here, which doesn't seem far-fetched, then the long-anticipated R-&B Revival will finally be upon us. Belushi and Ackroyd, come home: all is forgiven.

What intrigues me most about the prospect is that the immediate beneficiaries of this latest historical wrinkle will almost certainly be none other than the redoubtable Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes. Southside and the guys are, of course, no longer the anomaly they were in 1975 when they first came to our attention, but they're not exactly household words either, and on the simple level of dues paying they deserve the wider success a resurgence of interest in soul music would bring them.

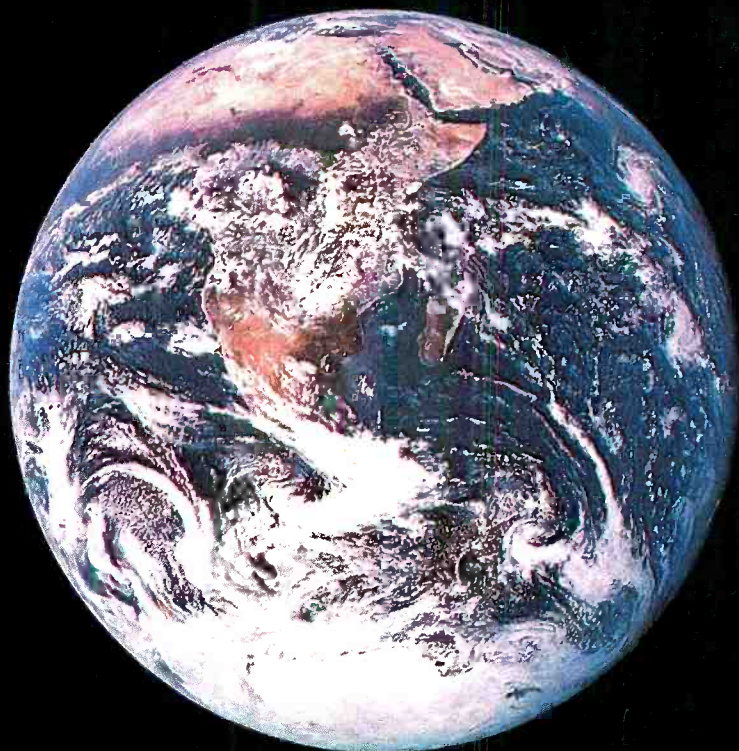
For the last couple of years the Jukes have been the uncontested Keepers of the Flame—but there's a bit of irony there. Just when it seemed that they finally had a shot at being fashionable, at broadening their audience beyond Jersey loyalists and the couple of hundred thousand devotees who get their albums into the lower stratosphere of the charts, they went and made "Love Is a Sacrifice," a fairly blatant attempt at a mainstream rock album, and a mediocre one at that. I took that personally, as did a lot of fans. Worse, I began to have dark thoughts about the live show. Heretofore, you see, the Jukes had been responsible for some of the most wonderful concert moments I've ever had. Granted, I'm a sucker for the genre, but Southside and the Jukes have a seemingly bottomless repertoire of wonderful songs, old and new, and they do

all of them with verve and immense good feeling. Their show has always been among the *friendliest* in rock; like Bruce Springsteen, the Jukes seem to view their music as part of a shared, communal history.

I recall, in particular, one hot summer night at a Long Island club when I wound up dancing on my table. It was the first time I'd heard them do the Sam Cooke song that still closes their shows, and to say I was moved would be a monumental understatement. It felt like the most beautiful music ever made, and I wanted it never to end. In varying degrees I've had moments like that at every Jukes show I've attended, so you can imagine my dread: if "Sacrifice" was not an accident, if they were serious about forsaking their roots and becoming just another arena-band dinosaur, then what might the show degenerate into? It was a prospect too horrifying to contemplate.

WELL, I needn't have worried. The Jukes just did three nights at one of the newer Manhattan dance-rock palaces, and on the basis of what I saw on opening night the Best Working Band in America remains as exhilarating and uplifting as ever. For almost three hours they brought it all home in grand style. While there's no denying that they have made the transition from the easy informality of the club band to the more studied professionalism of a concert act, such (relative) slickness is only appropriate for the music they're working with. *Nobody*, after all, ever fooled around in James Brown's band.

There were some new touches: an extended Motown medley (Temptations stuff, with three back-up girls from the Shore singing like birds) and a wonderfully gritty Wilson Pickett remake. It was great to see the crowd go ape for *On the Beach*, the latest in the long line of Jukes singles that should have been hits. And, with the exception of one or two dead moments when they did songs from the new album, it was obvious that the live Jukes have changed hardly at all. I breathed a sigh of profound relief and offered up a small prayer that the album documenting all this (due out as I write) sells well enough to give them the freedom to keep at it. □



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